THE HISTORY OF Miſs *Betſy Thoughtleſs*, In Four Volumes.

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BRITISH MUSEUM

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THE HISTORY OF Miſs BETSY THOUGHTLESS.

CHAP. I.

Gives the reader room to gueſs at what is to enſue, tho' ten to one but he finds himſelf deceived.

IT was always my opinion, that fewer women were undone by love, than vanity; and that thoſe miſtakes the ſex are ſometimes guilty of, proceed, for the moſt part, rather from inadvertency, than a vicious inclination. The ladies, however, I am ſorry to obſerve, are apt to make too little allowances to each other on this ſcore, and

ſeem better pleaſed with an occaſion to condemn, than to excuſe; and it is not above one, in a greater number than I will preſume to mention, who, while ſhe paſſes the ſevereſt cenſure on the conduct of her friend, will be at the trouble of taking a retroſpect on her own. There are ſome who behold, with indignation and contempt, thoſe errors in others, which, unhappily, they are every day falling into themſelves; and as want of a due conſideration occaſions the guilt, ſo the want of a due conſideration alſo occaſions the ſcandal: and there would be much leſs room either for the one or the other, were ſome part of that time, which is waſted at the toilet, in conſulting what dreſs is moſt becoming to the face, employed in examining the heart, and what actions are moſt becoming of the character.

Betſy Thoughtleſs was the only daughter of a gentleman of good family and fortune in L———e, where he conſtantly reſided, ſcarce ever going to London, and contented himſelf with ſuch diverſions as the country afforded. On the death of his wife, he ſent this little favourite, then about ten years old, to a boarding-ſchool, the governeſs of which had the reputation of a woman of great good ſenſe, fine breeding, and every way qualified for the well forming of the

the minds of thoſe young perſons who were entruſted to her care.

The old gentleman was ſo well pleaſed with having placed his daughter where ſhe was ſo likely to improve in all the accompliſhments befitting her ſex, that he never ſuffered her to come home, even at breaking-up times, when moſt of the other young ladies did ſo; but as the ſchool was not above ſeven or eight miles from his ſeat, he ſeldom failed calling to ſee her once or twice a week.

Miſs Betſy, who had a great deal of good-nature, and ſomewhat extremely engaging in her manner of behaviour, ſoon gained the affection not only of the governeſs, but of all the young ladies; but as girls, as well as women, have their particular favourites, to whom they may communicate their little ſecrets, there was one, who above all the others was diſtinguiſhed by her. Miſs Forward, for ſo ſhe was called, was alſo very fond of miſs Betſy. This intimacy beginning but in trivial things, and ſuch as ſuited their age, continued as they advanced nearer to maturity. Miſs Forward, however, had two years the advantage of her friend, yet did not diſdain to make her the confidante of a kind of amorous intrigue ſhe had entered into with a young

lad, called maſter Sparkiſh, the ſon of a neighbouring gentleman: he had fallen in love with her at church, and had taken all opportunities to convince her of his paſſion: —ſhe, proud of being looked upon as a woman, encouraged it. —Frequent letters paſſed between them; for ſhe never failed to anſwer thoſe ſhe received from him, both which were ſhewn to miſs Betſy, and this gave her an early light into the art and myſtery of courtſhip, and, conſequently, a reliſh for admiration. The young lover calling his miſtreſs angel and goddeſs, made her long to be in her teens, that ſhe might have the ſame fine things ſaid of her.

This correſpondence being, by ſome accident, diſcovered, the governeſs found it behoved her to keep a ſtrict eye upon miſs Forward; all the ſervants were examined concerning the conveying any letters, either to or from her; but none of them knew any thing of the matter: it was a ſecret to all but miſs Betſy, who kept it inviolably. It is fit, however, the reader ſhould not remain in ignorance.

Maſter Sparkiſh had read the ſtory of Piramus and Thisbe; — he told his miſtreſs of it, and in imitation of thoſe lovers of antiquity, ſtuck his letters into a little crevice he found in the garden wall, whence ſhe pulled

pulled them out every day, and returned her anſwers by the ſame friendly breach, which he very gallantly told her in one of his epiſtles, had been made by the god of love himſelf, in order to favour his ſuit; — ſo that all the governeſs's circumſpection could not hinder this amour from going on without interruption; and could they have contented themſelves with barely writing to each other, they might, probably, have done ſo till they both had been weary; but tho' I will not pretend to ſay, that either of them had any thing in their inclinations that was not perfectly conſiſtent with innocence, yet, it is certain, they both languiſhed for a nearer converſation, which the fertile brain of miſs Forward at laſt brought about.

She pretended one ſunday, in the afternoon, to have ſo violent a pain in her head, that ſhe could not go to church: miſs Betſy begged leave to ſtay and keep her company, and told the governeſs ſhe would read a ſermon, or ſome other good book, to her; the good old gentlewoman, little ſuſpecting the plot concerted between them, readily conſented.

No body being left in the houſe but themſelves, and one maid-ſervant, young Sparkiſh, who had previous notice at what hour to come, was let in at the garden

door, the key being always in it. Miſs Betſy left the lovers in an arbour, and went into the kitchen, telling the maid, ſhe had read miſs Forward to ſleep, and hoped ſhe would be better when ſhe waked. She amuſed the wench with one little chat or other, till ſhe thought divine ſervice was near over, then returned into the garden to give her friends warning it was time to ſeparate.

They had after this many private interviews, thro' the contrivance and aſſiſtance of miſs Betſy, who, quite charmed with being made the confidante of a perſon elder than herſelf, ſet all her wits to work, to render herſelf worthy of the truſt repoſed in her. Sometimes ſhe made pretences of going to the milliner, the mantua-maker, or to buy ſomething in town, and begged leave, that miſs Forward ſhould accompany her, ſaying, ſhe wanted her choice of what ſhe was to purchaſe. Sparkiſh was always made acquainted when they were to go out, and never failed to give them the meeting.

Miſs Forward had a great deal of the coquette in her nature: — ſhe knew how to play at faſt-and-looſe with her lover; and, young as ſhe was, took a pride in mingling pain with the pleaſure ſhe beſtowed.

ſtowed. Miſs Betſy was a witneſs of all the airs the other gave herſelf on this occaſion, and the artifices ſhe made uſe of, in order to ſecure the continuance of his addreſſes; ſo that thus early initiated into the myſtery of courtſhip, it is not to be wondered at, that when ſhe came to the practice, ſhe was ſo little at a loſs.

This intercourſe, however, laſted but a ſmall time; — their meetings were too frequent, and too little circumſpection uſed in them, not to be liable to diſcovery. The governeſs was informed, that in ſpite of all her care, the young folks had been too cunning for her; on which ſhe went to the father of Sparkiſh, acquainted him with what ſhe knew of the affair, and intreated he would lay his commands on his ſon to refrain all converſation with any of the ladies under her tuition. The old gentleman flew into a violent paſſion, at hearing his ſon had already begun to think of love; — he called for him, and after having rated his youthful folly in the ſevereſt manner, charged him to relate the whole truth of what had paſſed between him and the young lady mentioned by the governeſs. The poor lad was terrified beyond meaſure at his father's anger, and confeſſed every particular of his meetings with miſs Forward, and her companion; and

thus miſs Betſy's ſhare of the contrivance was brought to light, and drew on her a reprimand equally ſevere with that miſs Forward had received. The careful governeſs would not entirely depend on the aſſurances the father of Sparkiſh had given her, and reſolved to truſt neither of the ladies out of her ſight, while that young gentleman remained ſo near them, which ſhe knew would be but a ſhort time, he having finiſhed his ſchool-learning, and was ſoon to go to the univerſity. To prevent, alſo, any future ſtratagems being laid between miſs Betſy and miſs Forward, ſhe took care to keep them from ever being alone together, which was a very great mortification to them; but a ſudden turn ſoon after happened in the affairs of miſs Betſy, which put all I have been relating entirely out of her head.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

Shews miſs Betſy in a new ſcene of life, and the frequent opportunities ſhe had of putting in practice thoſe leſſons ſhe was beginning to receive from her young inſtructreſs at the boarding-ſchool.

THO' it is certainly neceſſary to inculcate into young girls all imaginable precaution, in regard to their behaviour towards thoſe of another ſex, yet I know not if it is not an error to dwell too much upon that topic. Miſs Betſy might, poſſibly, have ſooner forgot the little artifices ſhe had ſeen practiſed by miſs Forward, if her governeſs, by too ſtrenuouſly endeavouring to convince her how unbecoming they were, had not reminded her of them. Beſides, the good old gentlewoman was far ſtricken in years;—time had ſet his iron fingers on her cheeks,—had left his cruel marks on every feature of the face, and ſhe had little remains of having ever been capable of exciting thoſe inclinations ſhe ſo much condemned;—ſo that what ſhe ſaid ſeemed to miſs Betſy as ſpoke out of envy, or to ſhew her au-

thority, rather than the real dictates of truth.

I have often remarked, that reproofs from the old and ugly have much leſs efficacy than when given by perſons leſs advanced in years, and who may be ſuppoſed not altogether paſt ſenſibility themſelves of the gaieties they adviſe others to avoid.

Tho' all the old gentlewoman ſaid could not perſwade miſs Betſy there was any harm in miſs Forward's behaviour towards young Sparkiſh, yet ſhe had the complaiſance to liſten to her with all the attention the other could expect, or deſire from her.

She was, indeed, as yet too young to conſider of the juſtice of the other's reaſoning, and her future conduct ſhewed, alſo, ſhe was not of a humour to give her ſelf much pains in examining, or weighing in the balance of judgment, the merit of the arguments ſhe heard urged, whether for or againſt any point whatſoever. She had a great deal of wit, but was too volatile for reflection, and as a ſhip, without ſufficient ballaſt, is toſt about at the pleaſure of every wind that blows, ſo was ſhe hurried

hurried thro' the ocean of life, juſt as each predominant paſſion directed.

But I will not anticipate that gratification, which ought to be the reward of a long curioſity. The reader, if he has patience to go thro' the following pages, will ſee into the ſecret ſprings which ſet this fair machine in motion, and produced many actions, which were aſcribed, by the ill-judging and malicious world, to cauſes very different from the real ones.

All this, I ſay, will be revealed in time; but it would be as abſurd in a writer to ruſh all at once into the cataſtrophe of the adventures he would relate, as it would be impracticable in a traveller to reach the end of a long journey, without ſometimes ſtopping at the inns in his way to it.—To proceed therefore gradually with my hiſtory.

The father of miſs Betſy was a very worthy, honeſt, and good-natured man, but ſomewhat too indolent; and, by depending too much on the fidelity of thoſe he entruſted with the management of his affairs, had been for ſeveral years involved in a law ſuit, and, to his misfortune, the averſion he had to buſineſs rendered him alſo incapable of extricating himſelf from

it, and the deciſion was ſpun out to a much greater length than it need to have been, could he have been prevailed upon to have attended in perſon the ſeveral courts of juſtice the cauſe had been carried thro', by his more induſtrious adverſary. The exorbitant bills, however, which his lawyers were continually drawing upon him, joined with the preſſing remonſtrances of his friends, at laſt rouſed him from that inactivity of mind, which had already coſt him ſo dear, and determined him not only to take a journey to London, but likewiſe not to return home, 'till he had ſeen a final end put to this perplexing affair.

Before his departure he went to the boarding-ſchool, to take his leave of his beloved Betſy, and renew the charge he had frequently given the governeſs concerning her education; adding, in a mournful accent, that it would be a long time before he ſaw her again.

Theſe words, as it proved, had ſomewhat of prophetic in them. On his arrival in London, he found his cauſe in ſo perplexed and entangled a ſituation, as gave him little hopes of ever bringing it to a favourable iſſue. The vexation and fatigue he underwent on this account, joined

ed with the cloſeneſs of the town air, which had never agreed with his conſtitution, even in his younger years, ſoon threw him into that ſort of conſumption, which goes by the name of a galloping one, and they ſay, is the moſt difficult of any to be removed. He died in about three months, without being able to do any great matters concerning the affair, which had drawn him from his peaceful home, and according to all probability haſtened his fate. Being perfectly ſenſible, and convinced of his approaching diſſolution, he made his will, bequeathing the bulk of his eſtate to him whoſe right it was, his eldeſt ſon, then upon his travels thro' the greateſt part of Europe; all his perſonals, which were very conſiderable in the bank, and other public funds, he ordered ſhould be equally divided between Francis his ſecond ſon, at that time a ſtudent at Oxford, and miſs Betſy; conſtituting, at the ſame time, as truſtees to the ſaid teſtament, ſir Ralph Truſty, his near neighbour in the country, and mr. Goodman, a wealthy merchant in the city of London; both of them gentlemen of unqueſtionable integrity, and with whom he had preſerved a long and uninterrupted friendſhip.

On

On the arrival of this melancholly news, miſs Betſy felt as much grief as it was poſſible for a heart ſo young and gay as hers to be capable of; but a little time, for the moſt part, ſerves to obliterate the memory of misfortunes of this nature, even in perſons of a riper age; and had miſs Betſy been more afflicted than ſhe was, ſomething happened ſoon after, which would have very much contributed to her conſolation.

Mr. Goodman having lived without marrying till he had reached an age, which one ſhould have imagined would have prevented him from thinking of it at all, at laſt took it into his head to become a husband. The perſon he made choice of was called lady Mellaſin, relict of a baronet, who having little or no eſtate, had accepted of a ſmall employment about the court, in which poſt he died, leaving her ladyſhip one daughter, named Flora, in a very deſtitute condition. Goodman, however, had wealth enough for both, and conſulted no other intereſt than that of his heart.

As for the lady, the motive on which ſhe had conſented to be his wife may eaſily be gueſſed; and when once made ſo,

ſo, gained ſuch an abſolute aſcendancy over him, that whatever ſhe declared as her will, with him had the force of a law. She had an averſion to the city, — he immediately took a houſe of her chooſing at St. James's, inconvenient as it was for his buſineſs. Whatever ſervants ſhe diſapproved, tho' of never ſo long ſtanding, and of the moſt approved fidelity, were diſcharged, and others, more agreeable to her, put in their places. In fine, nothing ſhe deſired was denied, — he conſidered her as an oracle of wit and wiſdom, and thought it would be an unpardonable arrogance to attempt to ſet his reaſon againſt hers.

This lady was no ſooner informed of the truſt repoſed in him, than ſhe told him, ſhe thought it would be highly proper for miſs Betſy to be ſent for from the ſchool, and boarded with them, not only as her daughter would be a fine companion for that young orphan, they being much of the ſame age, and ſhe herſelf was more capable of improving her mind, than any governeſs of a ſchool could be ſuppoſed to be; but that alſo having her under his own eye, he would be more able to diſcharge his duty towards her as a guardian, than if ſhe were at the diſtance of near an hundred miles.

There

There was ſomething in this propoſal which had indeed the face of a great deal of good-nature and conſideration for miſs Betſy, at leaſt, it ſeemed highly ſo to mr. Goodman; but as ſir Ralph Truſty was joined with him in the guardianſhip of that young beauty, and was at that time in London, he thought it proper to conſult him on the occaſion; which having done, and finding no objection on the part of the other, lady Mellaſin, to ſhew her great complaiſance to the daughter of her husband's deceaſed friend, ſent her own woman to bring her from the boarding-ſchool, and attend her up to London.

Miſs Betſy had never ſeen this great metropolis; but had heard ſo much of the gay manner in which the genteel part of the world paſſed their time in it, that ſhe was quite tranſported at being told ſhe was to be removed thither. Mrs. Prinks (for ſo lady Mellaſin's woman was called) did not fail to heighten her ideas of the pleaſures of the place to which ſhe was going, nor to magnify the goodneſs of her lady, in taking her under her care, with the moſt extravagant encomiums: it is not, therefore, to be wondered at, that neither the tears of the good governeſs, who truly loved her, nor thoſe of her dear

miſs

miſs Forward, nor of any of thoſe ſhe left behind, could give any more than a momentary regret to a heart ſo poſſeſt with the expectations of going to receive every thing with which youth is liable to be enchanted. She promiſed, however, to keep up a correſpondence by letters, which ſhe did, 'till things, that ſeemed to her of much more importance, put her L —— e acquaintance entirely out of her head.

She was met at the inn, where the ſtage put up, by mr. Goodman in his own coach, accompanied by miſs Flora: The good old gentleman embraced her with the utmoſt tenderneſs, and aſſured her that nothing in his power, or in that of his family, would be wanting to compenſate as much as poſſible the loſs ſhe had ſuſtained by the death of her parents. The young lady alſo ſaid many obliging things to her, and they ſeemed highly taken with each other at this firſt interview, which gave the honeſt heart of Goodman an infinite ſatisfaction.

The reception given her by lady Melaſin when brought home, and preſented to her by her husband, was conformable to what mrs. Prinks had made her expect, — that lady omitting nothing to make

make her certain of being always treated by her with the ſame affection as her own daughter.

Sir Ralph Truſty, on being informed his young charge was come to town, came the next day to Mr. Goodman's to viſit her.—His lady accompanied him. There had been a great intimacy and friendſhip between her, and the mother of miſs Betſy, and ſhe could not hold in her arms the child of a perſon ſo dear to her, without letting fall ſome tears, which were looked upon, by the company, as the tribute due to the memory of the dead. The conjecture, in part, might be true, but the flow proceeded from the mixture of another motive, not ſuſpected:—that of compaſſion for the living. This lady was a woman of great prudence, piety, and virtue;—ſhe had heard many things relating to the conduct of lady Mellaſin, which made her think her a very unfit perſon to have the care of youth, eſpecially thoſe of her own ſex. She had been extremely troubled when Sir Ralph told her, that miſs Betſy was ſent for from the country, to live under ſuch tuition, and would fain have oppoſed it, could ſhe have done ſo without danger of creating a miſunderſtanding between him and Mr. Goodman, well knowing the bigotted re-

ſpect

ſpect the latter had for his wife, and how unwilling he would be to do any thing, that had the leaſt tendency to thwart her inclinations. She communicated her ſentiments, however, on this occaſion, to no perſon in the world, not even to her own husband; but reſolved, within herſelf, to take all the opportunities that fell in her way, of giving miſs Betſy ſuch inſtructions as ſhe thought neceſſary for her behaviour in general, and eſpecially towards the family in which it was her lot to be placed.

Miſs Betſy was now juſt entering into her fourteenth year, — a nice and delicate time, in perſons of her ſex; ſince it is then they are moſt apt to take the bent of impreſſion, which, according as it is well or ill directed, makes, or marrs, the future proſpect of their lives. She was tall, well ſhaped, and perfectly amiable, without being what is called a compleat beauty, and as ſhe wanted nothing to render her liable to the greateſt temptations, ſo ſhe ſtood in need of the ſureſt arms for her defence againſt them.

But while this worthy lady was full of cares, for the well doing of a young creature, who appeared ſo deſerving of regard, miſs Betſy thought ſhe had the higheſt reaſon to be ſatisfied with her ſituation, and how,

how, indeed, could it be otherwiſe? — lady Mellaſin kept a great deal of company; — ſhe received viſits every morning from ten to one o'clock, from the moſt gay and polite of both ſexes; — all the news of the town was talked on at her levee, and it ſeldom happened that ſome party of pleaſure was not formed for the enſuing evening, in all which miſs Betſy and miſs Flora had their ſhare.

Never did the miſtreſs of a private family indulge herſelf, and thoſe about her, with ſuch a continual round of publick diverſions. The court, the play, the ball, and opera, with giving and receiving viſits, engroſſed all the time could be ſpared from the toilet. It cannot, therefore, ſeem ſtrange, that miſs Betſy, to whom all theſe things were entirely new, ſhould have her head turned with the promiſcuous enjoyment, and the very power of reflection loſt amidſt the giddy whirl, nor that it ſhould be ſo long before ſhe could recover it enough, to ſee the little true felicity of ſuch a courſe of life.

Among the many topics, with which this brilliant ſociety entertained each other, it may be eaſily ſuppoſed, that love and gallantry were not excluded. Lady Mellaſin, tho' turned of forty, had her fine things

things ſaid to her; but both heaven and earth were ranſack'd for compariſons in favour of the beauty of miſs Flora and miſs Betſy; but as there was nothing particular in theſe kind of addreſſes, and intended only to ſhew the wit of thoſe that made them, theſe young ladies anſwered them only with raillery, in which art miſs Betſy ſoon learned to excel. — She had the glory, however, of being the firſt who excited a real paſſion in the heart of any of thoſe who viſited lady Mellaſin; tho' being accuſtomed to hear declarations, which had the appearance of love, yet were really no more than words of courſe, and made indiſcriminately to every fine woman, ſhe would not preſently perſwade herſelf, that this was more ſerious.

This firſt victim of her charms, was the only ſon of a very rich alderman, and having a fortune left him by a relation, independant of his father, who was the greateſt miſer in the world, was furniſh'd with the means of mingling with the beau monde, and of making one at every diverſion that was propoſed.

He had fancied miſs Flora a mighty fine creature, before he ſaw miſs Betſy; but the imaginary flame he had for her was ſoon converted into a ſincere one for

for the other. He truly loved her; and was almoſt diſtracted at the little credit ſhe gave to his profeſſions. His perſeverance, — his tremblings, whenever he approached her, — his tranſports on ſeeing her, — his anxieties at taking leave, ſo different from what ſhe had obſerved in any other of thoſe who had pretended to liſt themſelves under the banner of her charms, at length convincing her of the conqueſt ſhe had made, awakened in her breaſt that vanity ſo natural to a youthful mind. She exulted, — ſhe plumed herſelf, — ſhe uſed him ill and well by turns, taking an equal pleaſure in raiſing, or depreſſing, his hopes, and, in ſpite of her good nature, felt no ſatisfaction ſuperior to that of the conſciouſneſs of a power of giving pain to the man who loved her; — but with how great a mortification this ſhort-liv'd triumph was ſucceeded, the reader ſhall preſently be made ſenſible.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

Affords matter of condolance, or railery, according to the humour the reader happens to be in for either.

WE often ſee, that the leſs encouragement is given to the lover's ſuit, with the more warmth and eagerneſs he proſecutes it; and many people are apt to aſcribe this hopeleſs perſeverance to an odd perverſeneſs in the very nature of love; but, for my part, I rather take it to proceed from an ambition of ſurmounting difficulties: it is not, however, my province to enter into any diſcuſſion of ſo nice a point; — I deal only in matters of fact, and ſhall not meddle with definition.

It was not, till after miſs Betſy had reaſon to believe ſhe had engaged the heart of her lover too far for him to recall it, that ſhe began to take a pride in tormenting him. While ſhe looked on his addreſſes as of a piece with thoſe who called themſelves her admirers, ſhe had treated him in that manner which ſhe thought would moſt conduce to make him really

really ſo; but no ſooner did ſhe perceive, by the tokens before-mentioned, and many others, that his paſſion was of the moſt ſerious nature, than ſhe behaved to him in a faſhion quite the reverſe, eſpecially before company; for as ſhe had not the leaſt affection, or even a liking towards him, his ſubmiſſive deportment under the moſt cold, ſometimes contemptuous carriage, could afford her no other ſatisfaction, than, as ſhe fancied, it ſhewed the power of her beauty, and piqued thoſe ladies of her acquaintance, who could not boaſt of ſuch an implicit reſignation, and patient ſuffering from their lovers; in particular miſs Flora, who ſhe could not forbear imagining looked very grave on the occaſion. What foundation there was for a conjecture of this nature was, nevertheleſs, undiſcoverable, 'till a long time after.

As this courtſhip was no ſecret to any of the family, mr. Goodman thought himſelf obliged, both as the guardian of miſs Betſy, and the friend of alderman Saving, (for ſo the father of this young enamorato was called) to enquire upon what footing it ſtood. He thought, that if the old man knew and approved of his ſon's inclinations, he would have mentioned the affair to him, as they frequently ſaw each other, and it ſeemed to him, neither for the

the intereſt, nor reputation of his fair charge, to receive the clandeſtine addreſſes of any man whatſoever. She had a handſome fortune of her own, and he thought that, and her perſonal accompliſhments, ſufficient to entitle her to as good a match as mr. Saving; but then he knew the ſordid nature of the alderman, and that all the merits of miſs Betſy would add nothing in the balance, if her money was found too light to poize againſt the ſums his ſon would be poſſeſſed of. This being the caſe, he doubted not but that he was kept in ignorance of the young man's intentions, and fearing the matter might be carried too far, reſolved either to put a ſtop to it at once, or permit it to go on, on ſuch terms as ſhould free him from all cenſure from the one or the other party.

On talking ſeriouſly to the lover, he ſoon found the ſuggeſtions he had entertained had not deceived him. Young Saving frankly confeſſed, that his father had other views for him; but added, that if he could prevail on the young lady to marry him, he did not deſpair but that when the thing was once done, and paſt recall, the alderman would, by degrees, receive them into favour. "You know, "ſir," ſaid he, "that he has no child "but me, nor any kindred for whom he

" has the leaſt regard, and it cannot be
" ſuppoſed he would utterly diſcard me
" for following my inclinations in this
" point, eſpecially as they are in favour of
" the moſt amiable and deſerving of her
" ſex."

He ſaid much more on this head, but it had no weight with the merchant: — he anſwered, that if the alderman was of his way of thinking, all the flattering hopes his paſſion ſuggeſted to him, on that ſcore, might be realized; but that, according to the diſpoſition he knew him to be of, he ſaw but little room to think he would forgive a ſtep of this kind: — " There-
" fore," continued he, " I cannot allow
" this love-affair to be proſecuted any
" farther, and muſt deſire you will deſiſt
" viſiting at my houſe, 'till you have
" either conquered this inclination, or
" miſs Betſy is otherwiſe diſpoſed of.

This was a cruel ſentence for the truly affectionate Saving; but he found it in vain to ſollicit a repeal of it, and all he could obtain from him, was a promiſe to ſay nothing of what had paſſed to the alderman.

Mr. Goodman would have thought he had but half compleated his duty, had he ne-

neglected to ſound the inclinations of miſs Betſy on this account, and, in order to come more eaſily at the truth, he began with talking to her, in a manner which might make her look on him rather as a favourer of mr. Saving's pretenſions than the contrary, and was extremely glad to find, by her replies, how indifferent that young lover was to her. He then acquainted her with the reſolution he had taken, and the diſcourſe he had juſt had with him: and, to keep her from ever after encouraging the addreſſes of any man, without being authoriſed by the conſent of friends on both ſides, repreſented, in the moſt pathetic terms he was able, the danger to which a private correſpondence renders a young woman liable. She ſeemed convinced of the truth of what he ſaid, and promiſed to follow, in the ſtricteſt manner, his advice.

Whether ſhe thought herſelf, in reality, ſo much obliged to the conduct of her guardian in this, I will not take upon me to ſay; for tho' ſhe was not charmed with the perſon of mr. Saving, it is certain ſhe took an infinite pleaſure in the aſſiduities of his paſſion: it is therefore highly probable, that ſhe might imagine he meddled in this affair more than he had any occaſion to have done. She had, however,

but little time for reflection on her guardian's behaviour, an accident happening, which ſhewed her own to her in a light very different from what ſhe had ever ſeen it.

Lady Mellaſin had a ball at her houſe: — there was a great deal of company, among whom was a gentleman, named Gayland: — He was a man of family, — had a large eſtate, — ſung, danced, ſpoke French, and dreſſed well; — frequent ſucceſſes among the women had rendered him extremely vain, and as he had too great an admiration for his own perſon to be poſſeſſed of any great ſhare of it for that of any other, he enjoyed the pleaſures of love, without being ſenſible of the pains. This darling of the fair it was, that miſs Betſy picked out, to treat with the moſt peculiar marks of eſteem, whenever ſhe had a mind to give umbrage to poor Saving; much had that faithful lover ſuffered on the account of this fop; but the fair inflictor of his torments was puniſhed for her inſenſibility and ingratitude, by a way her inexperience of the world, and the temper of mankind in general, had made her far from apprehending.

While the company were employed, ſome in dancing, and others in particular con-

converſations, the beau found an opportunity to ſlip into miſs Betſy's hand a little billet, ſaying to her, at the ſame time, "You have got my heart, and this little "bit of paper will convey to you the ſen- "timents it is inſpired with in your fa- "vour." She imagining it was either a ſonnet, or epiſtle, in praiſe of her beauty, received it with a ſmile, and put it into her pocket. After every body had taken leave, and ſhe was retired to her chamber, ſhe examined it, and found to her great aſtoniſhment the contents as follow:

"*Dear Miſs*,

"I MUST certainly be either the moſt "ungrateful, or moſt conſumedly dull "fellow upon earth, not to have returned "the advances you have been ſo kind to "make me, had the leaſt opportunity of- "fered for my doing ſo; but lady Mel- "laſin, her daughter, the fool Saving, or "ſome impertinent creature or other, has "always been in the way, ſo that there "was not a poſſibility of giving you even "the leaſt earneſt of love; but, my dear, "I have found out a way to pay you the "whole ſum with intereſt; — which is "this: — You muſt invent ſome excuſe "for going out alone, and let me know "by a billet directed for me at White's, "the exact hour, and I will wait for you

" at the corner of the ſtreet in a hack-
" ney coach, — the window drawn up,
" and whirl you to a pretty ſnug place I
" know of, where we may paſs a deli-
" cious hour or two, without a ſoul to
" interrupt our pleaſures. Let me find
" a line from you to-morrow, if you can
" any way contrive it, being impatient
" to convince you how much I am,

" My dear creature,

" Yours, &c. &c.

" J. GAYLAND."

Impoſſible is it to expreſs the mingled emotions of ſhame, ſurprize, and indignation, which filled the breaſt of miſs Betſy, on reading this bold invitation: — ſhe threw the letter on the ground, ſhe ſtamped upon it, ſhe ſpurned it, and would have treated the author in the ſame manner, had he been preſent; but the firſt tranſports of ſo juſt a reſentment being over, a conſciouſneſs of having, by a too free behaviour towards him, emboldened him to take this liberty, involved her in the utmoſt confuſion, and ſhe was little leſs enraged with herſelf, than ſhe had reaſon to be with him. She could have tore out her very eyes, for having affect-

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ed to look kindly on a wretch, who durſt preſume ſo far on her ſuppoſed affection, and tho' ſhe ſpared thoſe pretty twincklers that violence, ſhe half drowned their luſtre in a deluge of tears. Never was a night paſſed in more cruel anxieties than what ſhe ſuſtained, both from the affront ſhe had received, and reflection, that it was chiefly the folly of her own conduct, which had brought it on her; and what greatly added to her vexation, was the uncertainty how it would beſt become her to act, on an occaſion which appeared ſo extraordinary to her. She had no friend whom ſhe thought it proper to conſult; —ſhe was aſhamed to relate the ſtory to any of the diſcreet and ſerious part of her acquaintance; —ſhe feared their reproofs for having counterfeited a tenderneſs for a man, which ſhe was now ſenſible ſhe ought, if it had been real, rather to have concealed with the utmoſt care, both from him, and all the world: — and as for lady Mellaſin and miſs Flora, though their conduct inſpired her not with any manner of awe, yet ſhe thought ſhe ſaw ſomething in thoſe ladies, which did not promiſe much ſincerity, and ſhewed as if they would rather turn her complaints into ridicule, than afford her that cordial and friendly advice ſhe ſtood in need of.

Theſe were the reaſons which determined her to keep the whole thing a ſecret from every one. At firſt ſhe was tempted to write to Gayland, and teſtify her diſdain of his preſumption, in terms which ſhould convince him how groſsly his vanity had impoſed upon him; but ſhe afterwards conſidered, that a letter from her was doing him too much honour, and, though never ſo reproachful, might draw another from him, either to excuſe and beg pardon for the temerity of the former, or poſſibly to affront her a ſecond time, by defending it, and repeating his requeſt. She deſpiſed and hated him too much to engage in a correſpondence with him of any kind, and therefore reſolved, as it was certainly moſt prudent, not to let him have any thing under her hand, but, when next ſhe ſaw him, to ſhew her reſentment by ſuch ways as occaſion ſhould permit.

He came not to mr. Goodman's, however, for three days, poſſibly waiting that time for a letter from miſs Betſy; but on the fourth he appeared at lady Mellaſin's tea-table. There were, beſides the family, ſeveral others preſent, ſo that he had not an opportunity of ſpeaking in private to miſs Betſy; but the looks ſhe gave him, ſo

ſo different from all he had ever ſeen her aſſume towards him, might have ſhewn any man, not blinded with his vanity, how much ſhe was offended; but he imagining her ill-humour proceeded only from the want of means to ſend to him, came again the next day, and happening to find her alone in the parlour, "What, "my dear," ſaid he, taking her in a free manner by the hand, "have you been ſo "cloſely watched by your guardian and "guardianeſſes here, that no kind mo-"ment offered for you to anſwer the de-"voirs of your humble ſervant?" "The "ſureſt guardians of my fame and peace," replied ſhe, ſnatching her hand away, "is "the little ſhare of underſtanding I am "miſtreſs of, which, I hope, will always "be ſufficient to defend my honour in "more dangerous attacks, than the rude "impertinencies of an idle coxcomb."

Theſe words, and the air with which they were ſpoke, one would think, ſhould have ſtruck with confuſion the perſon to whom they were directed; but Gayland was not ſo eaſily put out of countenance; and looking her full in the face, —"Ah, "Child!" cried he, "ſure you are not "in your right ſenſes to-day: — under-"ſtanding, — impertinencies, — idle cox-"comb, — very pleaſant i'faith! but upon

" my ſoul, if you think theſe airs become " you, you are the moſt miſtaken woman " in the world." " It may be ſo," cried ſhe, ready to burſt with inward ſpite at his inſolence, " but I ſhould be yet more " miſtaken, if I were capable of thinking " a wretch, like you, worthy of any thing " but contempt." With theſe words ſhe flung out of the room, and he purſued her with a horſe-laugh, till ſhe was out of hearing, and then went into the dining-room, where he found lady Mellaſin, and ſeveral who had come to viſit her.

Miſs Betſy, who had gone directly to her own chamber, ſent to excuſe coming down to tea, pretending a violent head-ach; nor would be prevailed upon to join the company, 'till ſhe heard Gayland had taken his leave, which he did much ſooner than uſual, being probably a good deal diſconcerted at the ſhock his vanity had received.

CHAP.

CHAP IV.

Verifies the old proverb, that one affliction treads upon the heels of another.

AS miſs Betſy was prevented from diſcovering to any one, the impudent attempt Gayland had made on her virtue, by the ſhame of having emboldened him to it, by too unreſerved a behaviour, ſo alſo the ſhame of the diſappointment, and rebuff he had received from her, kept him from ſaying any thing of what had paſſed between them; and this reſolution, on both ſides, rendered it very difficult for either of them to carry to the other, ſo as not to give ſome ſuſpicion. Betſy could not always avoid ſeeing him, when he came to lady Mellaſin's, for he would not all at once deſiſt his viſit, for two reaſons: firſt, becauſe it might give occaſion for an enquiry into the cauſe; and ſecondly, becauſe miſs Betſy would plume herſelf on the occaſion, as having, by her ſcorn, triumphed over his audacity, and drove him from the field of battle. He therefore reſolved to continue his viſits for ſome time, and to pique her, as he imagined, directed all the fine things his com-

mon-place-book was well ſtored with, to miſs Flora, leaving the other wholly neglected.

But here he was little leſs deceived, than he had been before in the ſentiments of that young lady: the hatred his late behaviour had given her, and the utter deteſtation it had excited in her towards him, had, for a time, extinguiſhed that vanity, ſo almoſt inſeparable from youth, eſpecially when accompanied with beauty; and ſhe rather rejoiced, than the contrary, to ſee him affect to be ſo much taken up with miſs Flora, that he could ſcarce ſay the leaſt complaiſant thing to her, as it freed her from the neceſſity of returning it, in ſome meaſure. Her good ſenſe had now ſcope to operate; — ſhe ſaw, as in a mirror, her own late follies in thoſe of miſs Flora, who ſwelled with all the pride of flattered vanity, on this new imaginary conqueſt over the heart of the accompliſhed Gayland, as he was generally eſteemed, and perceived the errors of ſuch a way of thinking and acting, in ſo clear a light, as had it continued, would, doubtleſs, have ſpared her thoſe anxieties her relapſe from it afterwards occaſioned.

In theſe ſerious reflections let us leave her, for a time, to ſee in what ſituation

mr.

mr. Saving was, after being denied acceſs to his miſtreſs. As it was impoſſible for a heart to be more truly ſincere and affectionate, he was far from being able to make any efforts for the baniſhing miſs Betſy's image thence: on the contrary, he thought of nothing but how to continue a correſpondence with her, and endeavour, by all the means in his power, to engage her to a private interview. As his flame was pure and reſpectful, he was ſome days debating within himſelf how to proceed, ſo as not to let her think he had deſiſted from his pretenſions, or to continue them in a manner at which ſhe ſhould not be offended. Love, when real, ſeldom fails of inſpiring the breaſt that harbours it with an equal ſhare of timidity:—he trembled whenever he thought of ſolliciting a meeting, yet, without it, how could he hope to retain any place in her memory, much leſs make any progreſs in gaining her affection! at length, however, he aſſumed courage enough to write to her, and, by a bribe to one of the ſervants, got his letter delivered to her, fearing if he ſent it by the poſt, or any public way to the houſe, it would be intercepted, by the caution he found mr. Goodman had reſolved to obſerve in this point.

Miſs Betſy, knowing his hand by the ſuperſcription, was a little ſurprized, as, perhaps, having never thought of him ſince they parted, but opened it without the leaſt emotion, either of pain or pleaſure: — ſhe knew him too well to be under any apprehenſions of being treated by him as ſhe had been by Gayland, and was too little ſenſible of his merits to feel the leaſt impatience for examining the dictates of his affection; yet, indifferent as ſhe was, ſhe could not forbear being touched on reading theſe lines:

" *Moſt adored of your ſex,*

" I DOUBT not but you are acquainted " with mr. Goodman's behaviour to me; " but oh! I fear, you are too inſenſible " of the agonies, in which my ſoul la- " bours, through his cruel caution. — " Dreadful is the loſs of ſight, yet what " is ſight to me, when it preſents not " you! — Though I ſaw you regardleſs of " my ardent paſſion, yet ſtill I ſaw you, " and while I did ſo, could not be wholly " wretched. — What have I not indured " ſince deprived of that only joy, for " which I wiſh to live! — Had it not " been improper for me to have been " ſeen near mr. Goodman's houſe, after " having been forbad entrance to it, I

" ſhould

" ſhould have dwelt for ever in your
" ſtreet, in hope of ſometimes getting a
" glimpſe of you from one or other of
" the windows; this I thought would
" be taken notice of, and might offend
" you: — But darkneſs freed me from
" theſe apprehenſions, and gave me the
" conſolation of breathing in the ſame
" air with you. — Soon as I thought all
" watchful eyes were cloſed, I flew to the
" place, which, where-ever my body is,
" contains my heart, and all its facul-
" ties. I pleaſed myſelf with looking on
" the roof that covers you, and invoked
" every ſtar to preſent me to you in your
" ſleep, in a form more agreeable than I
" can hope I ever appeared in to your
" waking fancy. Thus have I paſſed each
" night, and when the morning dawned,
" unwillingly retired to take that reſt,
" which nature more eſpecially demands,
" when heavy melancholly oppreſſes the
" heart. I ſlept, — but how? — diſtract-
" ing images ſwam in my tormented
" brain, and waked me with horrors in-
" conceivable. Equally loſt to buſineſs,
" as to all ſocial commerce, I fly man-
" kind, and like ſome diſcontented ghoſt
" ſeek out the moſt ſolitary walks, and
" lonely ſhades, to pour forth my com-
" plaints. O miſs Betſy! I cannot live,
" if longer denied the ſight of you! —

" In

" In pity to my ſufferings, permit me " yet once more to ſpeak to you, even " tho' it be to take a laſt farewell. I " have made a little kind of intereſt with " the woman at the habit-ſhop, in Covent- " garden, where I know you ſometimes " go: — I dread to intreat you would " call there to-morrow, yet if you are ſo " divinely good, be aſſured I ſhall enter- " tain no preſuming hopes on the conde- " ſcenſion you ſhall be pleaſed to make " me; but acknowledge it as the meer " effect of that compaſſion, which is in- " herent to a generous mind. Alas! I " muſt be much more worthy than I can " yet pretend to be, before I dare flatter " myſelf with owing any thing to a more " ſoft emotion, than thoſe I have men- " tioned. Accuſe me not, therefore, of " too much boldneſs in this petition, but " grant to my deſpair what you would " deny to the love of

" Your moſt faithful,

" And everlaſting ſlave,

" H. SAVING.

" P.S. The favour of one line to let me " know whether I may expect the bleſ- " ſing I implore, will add to the " bounty of it. The ſame hand that " brings

" brings you this, will alſo deliver your " commands to yours as above.

Miſs Betſy read this letter ſeveral times, and the oftner ſhe did ſo, the more ſhe ſaw into the ſoul of him that ſent it. How wide the difference between this, and that ſhe had received from Gayland! 'Tis true, they both deſired a meeting, each made the ſame requeſt, but the manner in which the former was asked, and the end propoſed by the grant of it, ſhe eaſily perceived were as diſtant as heaven and hell. She called to mind the great reſpect he had always treated her with;— ſhe was convinced both of his honour and ſincerity, and thought ſomething was due from her on that account. In fine, after deliberating a little within herſelf, ſhe reſolved to grant his requeſt, and accordingly wrote to him in theſe terms;

" *Sir*,

" THO' it is my fixed determination " to encourage the addreſſes of no " man whatever, without the approbation " of my guardians, yet I think myſelf " too much obliged to the affection you " have expreſſed for me, to refuſe you a " favour of ſo trifling a nature, as that " you have taken the pains to ask. I " will be at the place you mention to-mor-

" row,

" row, ſome time in the forenoon; but " deſire you will expect nothing from it, " but a laſt farewell, as you have pro- " miſed to be contented with. Till then, " adieu."

After finiſhing this little billet, ſhe called the maid, whom Saving had made his confidante, into her chamber, and asked her, when ſhe expected he would come for an anſwer? To which the other replied, that he had appointed her to meet him at the corner of the ſtreet very early in the morning, before any of the windows were open. " Well then," ſaid miſs Betſy ſmiling, and putting the letter into her hands, " give him this. I do it for your " ſake, Nanny; for, I ſuppoſe, you will " have a double fee on the delivery." " The gentleman is too much in love," anſwered ſhe, " not to be grateful."

Miſs Betſy paſt the remainder of that day, and the enſuing night, with that tranquility which is inſeparable from a mind unincumbered with paſſion; but the next morning remembering her promiſe, while lady Mellaſin and miſs Flora were engaged with the beaux and belles at their levee, ſhe ſlipt out, and taking a chair at the end of the ſtreet, went to the milliner's according to appointment. She doubted not

not but the impatience of her lover would have brought him there long before her, and was very much amazed to find herſelf the firſt comer. She knew not, however, but ſome extraordinary accident, unforeſeen by him, might have happened to detain him longer than he expected, and from the whole courſe of his paſt behaviour, could find no ſhadow of reaſon to ſuſpect him of a wilful remiſſneſs. She ſat down in the ſhop, and amuſed herſelf with talking to the woman on the new modes of dreſs, and ſuch like ordinary matters; but made not the leaſt mention of the motive which had brought her there that morning: and the other, not knowing whether it would be proper to take any notice, was alſo ſilent on that occaſion; but miſs Betſy obſerved, ſhe often turned her head towards the window, and ran to the door, looking up and down the ſtreet, as if ſhe expected ſomebody, who was not yet come.

Miſs Betſy could not forbear being ſhocked at a diſappointment, which was the laſt thing in the world ſhe could have apprehended. She had, notwithſtanding, the patience to wait from a little paſt eleven 'till near two o'clock, expecting, during every moment of that time, that he would either come, or ſend ſome excuſe for not doing

doing ſo; but finding he did neither, and that it was near the hour in which mr. Goodman uſually dined, ſhe took her leave of the woman, and went home full of agitations.

The maid, who was in the ſecret, happening to open the door, and miſs Betſy looking round, and perceiving there was nobody in hearing, ſaid to her, "Nanny, "are you ſure you delivered my letter "ſafe into mr. Saving's hands?" "Sure! "miſs," cried the wench, "yes, as ſure "as I am alive, and he gave me a good "queen Anne's guinea for my trouble:— "I have not had time ſince to put it up," continued ſhe, taking it out of her boſom, "here it is." "Well, then, what did he "ſay on receiving it?" ſaid miſs Betſy. "I never ſaw a man ſo tranſported," replied ſhe, "he put it to his mouth, and "kiſſed it with ſuch an eagerneſs, I "thought he would have devoured it." Miſs Betſy asked no further queſtions, but went up to her chamber to pull off her hood, not being able to know how ſhe ought to judge of this adventure.

She was ſoon called down to dinner, but her mind was too much perplexed to ſuffer her to eat much.

She

She was extremely uneaſy the whole day, for an explanation of what at preſent ſeemed ſo myſterious, and this gave her little leſs pain, than, perhaps, ſhe would have felt had ſhe been poſſeſſed with an equal ſhare of love; but in the evening her natural vivacity got the better, and not doubting but the next morning ſhe ſhould receive a letter with a full eclairciſement of this affair, ſhe enjoyed the ſame ſweet repoſe, as if nothing had happened to ruffle her temper.

The morning came, but brought no billet from that once obſequious lover: — the next, and three or four ſucceeding ones were barren of the fruit ſhe ſo much expected. What judgment could ſhe form of an event ſo odd? — She could not bring herſelf to think Saving had taken pains to procure a rendezvous with her, on purpoſe to diſappoint and affront her; and was not able to conceive any probable means, by which he ſhould be prevented from writing to her. Death only ſhe thought could be an excuſe for him, and had that happened ſhe ſhould have heard of it. Sometimes ſhe fancied that the maid had been treacherous; but when ſhe conſidered, ſhe could get nothing by being ſo, and that it was, on the contrary,

rather

rather her intereſt to be ſincere, ſhe rejected that ſuppoſition. The various conjectures, which by turns came into her head, rendered her however exceſſively diſturbed, and in a ſituation which deſerved ſome ſhare of pity, had not her pride kept her from revealing either her diſcontent, or the motives of it, to any one perſon in the world.

CHAP. V.

Contains nothing very extraordinary, yet ſuch things as are highly proper to be known.

I THINK it is generally allowed, that there are few emotions of the mind more uneaſy than ſuſpence. Not the extreme youth of miſs Betſy, not all her natural chearfulneſs, nor her perfect indifference for the ſon of alderman Saving, could enable her to throw off the vexation, in which his late behaviour had involved her. Had the motive been the moſt mortifying of any that could be imagined to her vanity, pride and reſentment would then have come to her aſſiſtance: — ſhe would have deſpiſed the author of the inſult, and, in time, have forgot the inſult

inſult itſelf; but the uncertainty in what manner ſhe ought to think of the man, and this laſt action of his, made both dwell much longer on her mind, than otherwiſe they would have done. As the poet truly ſays,

" When puzzling doubts the anxious
" boſom ſeize,
" To know the worſt is ſome degree of
" eaſe."

This is a maxim which will hold good, even when the ſtrongeſt and moſt violent paſſions operate; but miſs Betſy was poſſeſſed of no more than a bare curioſity, which as ſhe had as yet no other ſenſation, which demanded gratification, was ſufficiently painful to her.

It was about ten, or twelve days, that ſhe continued to labour under this dilemma; but at the expiration of that time, was partly relieved from it by the following means.

Mr. Goodman happening to meet alderman Saving, with whom he had great buſineſs, upon 'Change, deſired he would accompany him to an adjacent tavern. To which the other complied; but with an air much more grave and reſerved, than

than he was accuſtomed to put on, with a perſon whom he had known for a great number of years, and was concerned with in ſome affairs of traffic; they went together to the ſhip tavern.

After having ended what they had to ſay to each other upon buſineſs, "Mr. "Goodman," ſaid the alderman, "we "have long been friends, I always thought "you an honeſt, fair-dealing man, and "am, therefore, very much ſurprized you "ſhould go about to put upon me in the "manner you have lately done." "Put "upon you, ſir," cried the merchant, "I "know not what you mean, and am very "certain I never did any thing that "might call in queſtion my integrity, "either to you or any one elſe." "It "was great integrity indeed," reſumed the alderman, with a ſneer, "to endea-"vour to draw my only ſon into a clan-"deſtine marriage, with the girl you "have at your houſe." Mr. Goodman was aſtoniſhed, as well he might, at this accuſation, and perceiving by ſome other words that the alderman let fall, that he was well acquainted with the love young Saving had profeſſed for miſs Betſy, frankly related to him all that he knew of the courtſhip, and the method he had taken to put a ſtop to it. "That was not

"enough,

" enough, ſir," cried the alderman haſtily, " you ſhould have told me of it. — Do " you think young folks, like them, " would have regarded your forbidding? " — No, no; I'll warrant you they would " have found ſome way or other to come " together before now, and the boy might " have been ruined, if I had not been in- " formed by other hands how things were " carried on, and put it out of the power " of any of you to impoſe upon me. " The girl may ſpread her nets to catch " ſome other woodcock, if ſhe can, — " thanks to heaven, and my own pru- " dence, my ſon is far enough out of her " reach."

Mr. Goodman, though one of the beſt natured men in the world, could not keep himſelf from being a little ruffled at the alderman's diſcourſe, and told him, that though he had been far from encouraging mr. Saving's inclinations, and ſhould always think it the duty of a ſon to conſult his father in every thing he did, eſpecially in ſo material a point as that of marriage; yet he ſaw no reaſon for treating miſs Betſy with contempt, as ſhe was of a good family, had a very pretty fortune of her own, and ſuitable accompliſhments.

" You take a great deal of pains to ſet " her off," ſaid the alderman, " and ſince " you married a court-lady not worth a " groat, have got all the romantic idle " notions of the other end of the town, " as finely as if you had been bred there. " A good family! — very pleaſant i'faith. " Will a good family go to market? — " Will it buy a joint of mutton at the " butcher's? — Or a pretty gown at the " mercer's? Then, a pretty fortune you " ſay; — enough it may be to ſquander " away at cards and maſquerades, for a " month or two. She has ſuitable ac- " compliſhments too; — yes, indeed, they " are ſuitable ones, I believe: — I ſup- " poſe ſhe can ſing, dance, and jabber a " little French; but I'll be hanged if ſhe " knows how to make a pye, or a pud- " ding, or to teach her maid to do it."

The reflection on lady Mellaſin, in the beginning of this ſpeech, ſo much incenſed mr. Goodman, that he could ſcarce attend to the latter part of it: — he forbore interrupting him, however, but as ſoon as he had done ſpeaking, replied in terms which ſhewed his reſentment. In fine, ſuch hot words paſſed between them, as, had they been younger men, might have produced worſe conſequences; — but the

ſpirit

ſpirit of both being equally evaporated in mutual reproaches, they grew more calm, and, at laſt, talked themſelves into as good harmony as ever. Mr. Goodman ſaid, he was ſorry that he had been prevailed upon, by the young man's entreaties, to keep his courtſhip to miſs Betſy a ſecret; and the alderman begged pardon in his turn, for having ſaid any thing diſreſpectful of lady Mellaſin.

On this they ſhook hands, another half pint of ſherry was called for, and before they parted, the alderman acquainted mr. Goodman, that to prevent entirely all future correſpondence between his ſon and miſs Betſy, he had ſent him to Holland ſome days ago, without letting him know any thing of his intentions, 'till every thing was ready for his embarkation. "I "ſent," ſaid he, "the night before he "was to go, his portmanteau, and what "other luggage I thought he would have "occaſion for, to the inn where the Har-"wich ſtage puts up, and making him "be called up very early in the morning, "told him, he muſt go a little way out "of town with me, upon extraordinary "buſineſs: — he ſeemed very unwilling, "ſaid he had appointed that morning to "meet a gentleman, and begged I would "delay the journey to the next day, or

" even till the afternoon. What cauſed " this backwardneſs, I cannot imagine, " for I think it was impoſſible he could " know my deſigns on this ſcore; but, " whatever was in his head, I took care " to diſappoint it: — I liſtened to none of " his excuſes, nor truſted him out of my " ſight, but forced him to go with me to " the coach, in which I had ſecured a " couple of places. He was horridly " ſhocked when he found where he was " going, and would fain have perſwaded " me to repeal his baniſhment, as he cal- " led it: — I laughed in my ſleeve, but " took no notice of the real motive I had " for ſending him away, and told him, " there was an abſolute neceſſity for his " departure; — that I had a buſineſs of " the greateſt importance at Rotterdam, " in which I could truſt nobody but him- " ſelf to negotiate, and that he would " find, in his trunk, letters and other " papers, which would inſtruct him how " to act.

" In fine," continued the alderman, " I " went with him aboard, ſtaid with " him till they were ready to weigh " anchor, then returned, and ſtood on " the beach till the ſhip ſailed quite " out of ſight, ſo that if my gentleman " had a thought of writing to his miſtreſs,

" he

" he had not the leaſt opportunity for it." He added, that he did not altogether deceive his ſon, having, indeed, ſome affairs to tranſact at Rotterdam, though they were not of the mighty conſequence he had pretended; but which he had, by a private letter to his agent there, ordered ſhould be made appear as intricate and perplexed as poſſible, that the young gentleman's return might be delayed as long as there was any plauſible excuſe for detaining him, without his ſeeing through the reaſon of it.

Mr. Goodman praiſed the alderman's diſcretion in the whole conduct of this buſineſs, and to atone for having been prevailed upon to keep young Saving's ſecret from him, offered to make intereſt with a friend he had at the poſt-office, to ſtop any letter ſhould be directed for miſs Betſy Thoughtleſs, by the way of Holland; " by which means," ſaid he, " all " communication between the young " people will ſoon be put an end to; he " will grow weary of writing when he re- " ceives no anſwers, and ſhe of thinking " of him as a lover, when ſhe finds he " ceaſes to tell her he is ſo."

The alderman was ready to hug his old friend for this propoſal, which, it is cer-

tain, he made in the ſincerity of his heart, for they no ſooner parted, than he went to the office, and fulfilled his promiſe.

When he came home, in order to hinder miſs Betſy from expecting to hear any thing more of mr. Saving, he told her he had been treated by the alderman pretty roughly, on account of the encouragement had been given in his houſe to the amorous addreſſes had been made to her by his ſon; "and," added he, "the old "man is ſo incenſed againſt him, for "having a thought of that kind in your "favour, that he has ſent him beyond "ſea, — I know not to what part; — "but it ſeems he is never to come back, "till he has given full aſſurances the lik-"ing he has for you is utterly worn off."

"He might have ſpared himſelf the "pains," ſaid miſs Betſy, bluſhing with diſdain, "his ſon could have informed "him, how little I was inclinable to liſten "to any thing he ſaid on the ſcore of "love; and I myſelf, if he had asked me "the queſtion, would have given him the "ſtrongeſt aſſurances that words could "form, that if ever I changed my con-"dition, which heaven knows I am far "from thinking on as yet, I ſhould

"never

"never be prevailed upon to do it, by "any merits his ſon was poſſeſſed of."

Mr. Goodman congratulated her on the indifference ſhe expreſſed, and told her, he hoped ſhe would always continue in the ſame humour, till an offer which promiſed more ſatisfaction in marriage ſhould happen to be made.

Nothing more was ſaid on this head; but miſs Betſy, on ruminating on what mr. Goodman had related, eaſily imagined, that the day in which he had been ſent away, was the ſame on which he had appointed to meet her, and therefore excuſed his not coming as a thing unavoidable; yet as ſhe knew not the precaution his father had taken, was not ſo ready to forgive him for not ſending a line to prevent her waiting ſo long for him at the habit-ſhop. She could not, however, when ſhe reflected on the whole tenour of his deportment to her, think it poſſible he ſhould all at once become guilty of wilfully omitting, what even common good manners and decency required. She ſoon grew weary, however, of troubling herſelf about the matter, and a very few days ſerved to make her loſe even the memory of it.

CHAP. VI.

May be of ſome ſervice to the ladies, eſpecially the younger ſort, if well attended to.

MISS Betſy had now no perſon that profeſſed a ſerious paſſion for her; but as ſhe had yet never ſeen the man capable of inſpiring her with the leaſt emotions of tenderneſs, ſhe was quite eaſy as to that point, and wiſhed nothing beyond what ſhe enjoyed, the pleaſure of being told ſhe was very handſome, and gallanted about by a great number of thoſe, who go by the name of very pretty fellows. Pleaſed with the praiſe, ſhe regarded not the condition or merits of the praiſer, and ſuffered herſelf to be treated, preſented, and ſquir'd about to all public places, either by the rake, the man of honour, the wit, or the fool, the married, as well as the unmarried, without diſtinction, and juſt as either fell in her way.

Such a conduct as this could not fail of laying her open to the cenſure of malicious tongues: — the agreeableneſs of her perſon, her wit, and the many accom-

compliſhments ſhe was miſtreſs of, made her envied and hated, even by thoſe who profeſſed the greateſt friendſhip for her. Several there were who, though they could ſcarce ſupport the vexation it gave them to ſee her ſo much preferred to themſelves, yet choſe to be as much with her as poſſible, in the cruel hope of finding ſome freſh matter wherewith to blaſt her reputation.

Certain it is, that tho' ſhe was as far removed, as innocence itſelf, from all intent or wiſh of committing a real ill, yet ſhe paid too little regard to the appearances of it, and ſaid and did many things, which the actually criminal would be more cautious to avoid. Hurried by an exceſs of vanity, and that love of pleaſure ſo natural to youth, ſhe indulged herſelf in liberties, of which ſhe foreſaw not the conſequences.

Lady Truſty, who ſincerely loved her, both for her own ſake, and that of her deceaſed mother, came more often to mr. Goodman's than otherwiſe ſhe would have done, on purpoſe to obſerve the behaviour of miſs Betſy: ſhe had heard ſome accounts, which gave her great diſſatisfaction; but as ſhe was a woman of penetration, ſhe eaſily perceived, that plain

reproof was not the way to prevail on her to reclaim the errors of her conduct; --- that ſhe muſt be inſenſibly weaned from what, at preſent, ſhe took ſo much delight in, and brought into a different manner of living, by ways which ſhould rather ſeem to flatter than check her vanity: ſhe therefore earneſtly wiſhed to get her down with her into L———e, where ſhe was ſoon going herſelf; but knew not how to ask her without making the ſame invitation to miſs Flora, whoſe company ſhe no way deſired, and whoſe example ſhe was ſenſible had very much contributed to give miſs Betſy that air of levity, which rendered her good ſenſe almoſt uſeleſs to her.

This worthy lady happening to find her alone one day, (a thing not very uſual) ſhe asked, by way of ſounding her inclination, if ſhe would not be glad to ſee L———e again; to which ſhe replied, that there were many people for whom ſhe had a very great reſpect, but the journey was too long to be taken merely on the ſcore of making a ſhort viſit; for ſhe owned ſhe did not like the country well enough to continue in it for any length of time.

Lady

Lady Truſty would fain have perſwaded her into a better opinion of the place ſhe was born in, and which moſt of her family had paſſed the greateſt part of their lives in; but miſs Betſy was not to be argued into any tolerable ideas of it, and plainly told her ladyſhip, that what ſhe called a happy tranquil manner of ſpending ones days, ſeemed to her little better than being buried alive.

From declaring her averſion to a country life, ſhe ran into ſuch extravagant encomiums on thoſe various amuſements, which London every day preſented, that lady Truſty perceived it would not be without great difficulty ſhe would be brought to a more juſt way of thinking: ſhe concealed, however, as much as poſſible, the concern it gave her to hear her expreſs herſelf in this manner, contenting herſelf with ſaying, calmly, that London was, indeed, a very agreeable place to live in, eſpecially for young people, and the pleaſures it afforded were very elegant; "but then" ſaid ſhe, "the too frequent "repetition of them, may ſo much en-"groſs the mind, as to take it off from "other objects, which ought to have their "ſhare in it: beſides," continued ſhe, "there are but too frequent proofs, that

" an innate principle of virtue is not al-
" ways a ſufficient guard againſt the many
" ſnares laid for it, under the ſhew of in-
" nocent pleaſures, by wicked and deſign-
" ing perſons of both ſexes; nor can it
" be eſteemed prudence to run ones ſelf
" into dangers meerly to ſhew our ſtrength
" in overcoming them; nor, perhaps,
" would even the victory turn always to
" our glory: the world is cenſorious,
" and ſeldom ready to put the beſt con-
" ſtruction on things; ſo that reputation
" may ſuffer, though virtue triumphs."

Miſs Betſy liſtened to all this with a good deal of attention. — The impudent attempt Gayland had made on her, came freſh into her mind, and made this lady's remonſtrances ſink the deeper into it. The power of reflection being a little awakened in her, ſome freedoms alſo, not altogether conſiſtent with ſtrict modeſty, which others had offered to her, convinced her of the error of maintaining too little reſerve; ſhe thanked her kind adviſer, and promiſed to obſerve the precepts ſhe had given.

Lady Truſty finding this good effect of what ſhe had ſaid, ventured to proceed ſo far, as to give ſome hints, that the conduct of miſs Flora had been far from blame-

blameleſs; and, therefore, purſued ſhe, I ſhould be glad, methinks, to ſee you ſeparated from that young lady, though it were but for a ſmall time; and then gave her to underſtand, how great a pleaſure it would be to her, to get her down with her to L—— e, if it could be any way contrived, that ſhe could go without miſs Flora.

"As I have been ſo long from home," ſaid ſhe, "I know I ſhall have all the "gentry round the country to welcome "me at my return, and if you ſhould find "the company leſs polite, than thoſe you "leave behind, it will, at leaſt, diverſify "the ſcene, and render the entertainments "of London new to you a ſecond time, "when you come back."

Miſs Betſy found in herſelf a ſtrong inclination to comply with this propoſal, and told lady Truſty, ſhe ſhould think herſelf happy in paſſing the whole ſummer with her; and as to miſs Flora, the ſame offer might be made to her, without any danger of her accepting it. "I am not of your "opinion," ſaid the other; "the girl has "no fortune, but what mr. Goodman ſhall "be pleaſed to give her; which cannot "be very conſiderable, as he has a nephew "in the Eaſt-Indies, whom he is extremely

"fond

" fond of, and will make his heir. Lady " Mellaſin would, therefore, catch at the " opportunity of ſending her daughter to " a place where there are ſo many gentle- " men of eſtates, among whom ſhe might " have a better chance for getting a hus- " band, than ſhe can have in London, " where her character would ſcarce entitle " her to ſuch a hope. I will however," purſued ſhe, " run the riſque, and chooſe " rather to have a gueſt, whoſe company " I do not ſo well approve of, than be " deprived of one I ſo much value."

Miſs Betſy teſtified the ſenſe ſhe had of her ladyſhip's goodneſs, in the moſt grateful and obliging terms, and lady Mellaſin, and miſs Flora coming home ſoon after, lady Truſty ſaid, ſhe was come on purpoſe to ask permiſſion for miſs Flora and miſs Betſy to paſs two or three months with her, down in L——e.

Lady Mellaſin, as the other had imagined, ſeemed extremely pleaſed with the invitation, and told her, ſhe did her daughter a great deal of honour, and ſhe would take care things ſhould be prepared for both the young ladies to attend her, on her ſetting out. Lady Truſty then told her ſhe had fixed the day for it, which was about a fortnight after this converſation and

and ſome other matters relating to the journey being regulated, took her leave, highly pleaſed with the thoughts of getting miſs Betſy to a place, where ſhe ſhould have an opportunity of uſing her utmoſt endeavours to improve the good ſhe found in her diſpoſition, and of weaning her, by degrees, from any ill habits ſhe might have contracted in that Babel of mixed company ſhe was accuſtomed to at lady Mellaſin's.

CHAP. VII.

Is a medley of various particulars, which pave the way for matters of more conſequence.

MISS Flora had now nothing in her head, but the many hearts ſhe expected to captivate, when ſhe ſhould arrive in L————e; and lady Mellaſin, who ſoothed her in all her vanities, reſolved to ſpare nothing which ſhe imagined would contribute to that purpoſe. Miſs Betſy, who had the ſame ambition, though for different ends, made it alſo pretty much her ſtudy to ſet off, to the beſt advantage, the charms ſhe had received from nature. The important article of dreſs now engroſſed

groſſed the whole converſation of theſe ladies. The day after that in which lady Truſty had made the invitation to the two young ones, lady Mellaſin went with them to the mercer's to buy ſome ſilks: ſhe pitched on a very genteel new-faſhioned pattern for her daughter; but choſe one for miſs Betſy, which, though rich, ſeemed to her not well fancied; ſhe teſtified her diſapprobation, but lady Mellaſin ſaid ſo much in the praiſe of it, and the mercer, either to pleaſe her, or becauſe he was deſirous of getting it ſold, aſſured miſs Betſy that it was admired by every body, that it was the neweſt thing he had in his ſhop, and had already ſold ſeveral pieces to ladies of the firſt quality: all this did not argue miſs Betſy into a liking of it; yet between them ſhe was over-perſwaded to have it. When theſe purchaſes were made, they went home, only ſtopped at the mantua-maker's in their way, to order her to come that afternoon; lady Mellaſin did no more than ſet them down, and then went on in the coach to make a viſit.

The young ladies fell to reviewing their ſilks; but miſs Betſy was no way ſatisfied with her's: the more ſhe looked upon it, the worſe it appeared to her. "I ſhall "never wear this with any pleaſure," ſaid ſhe; "I wiſh the man had it in his "ſhop

" ſhop again, for I think it quite ugly." Miſs Flora told her, that ſhe wondered at her, that the thing was perfectly handſome, and that my lady's judgment was never before called in queſtion. " That may be," replied miſs Betſy, " but certainly every " one ought to pleaſe their own fancy in " the choice of their cloaths; for my part " I ſhall never endure to ſee myſelf in it." " Not when their fancy happens to differ " from that of thoſe who know better than " themſelves what is fit for them," cried miſs Flora; " and, beſides, have the power " over them." She ſpoke this with ſo much pertneſs, that miſs Betſy, who had a violent ſpirit, was highly provoked. " Power over " them!" cried ſhe, " I do not know what " you mean, miſs Flora; mr. Goodman is " one of my guardians indeed, but I don't " know why that ſhould entitle his lady to " direct me in what I ſhall wear."

Mr. Goodman, who happened to be looking over ſome papers in a little cloſet he had within his parlour, hearing part of this diſpute, and finding it was like to grow pretty warm, came out, in hopes of moderating it. On hearing miſs Betſy's complaint, he deſired to ſee the ſilk; which being ſhewn him, " I do not pretend," ſaid he, " to much underſtanding in theſe " things; but, methinks, it is very hand-

ſome."

" ſome." It would do well enough for " winter, ſir," replied miſs Betſy; " but " it is too hot and heavy for ſummer; " beſides, it is ſo thick and clumſy, it " would make me look as big again as I " am: I'll not wear it, I am reſolved, in " the country, whatever I do when I come " to town, in the dark weather.

" Well," ſaid mr. Goodman, " I will " ſpeak to my lady to get it changed " for ſomething elſe." " Indeed, ſir," cried miſs Flora, " I am ſure my mamma " will do no ſuch thing, and take it very " ill to hear it propoſed." " You need " not put yourſelf in any heat," replied miſs Betſy, " I don't deſire ſhe ſhould be " troubled any farther about it; but, ſir," continued ſhe, turning to mr. Goodman, " I think I am now at an age capable of " chooſing for myſelf, in the article of " dreſs; and as it has been ſettled between " you and ſir Ralph Truſty, that out of " the income of my fortune, thirty pounds " a year ſhould be allowed for my board, " twenty pounds for my pocket expences, " and fifty for my cloaths, I think I ought " to have the two latter entirely at my own " diſpoſal, and to lay it out as I think " fit, and not be obliged, like a charity-" child, to wear whatever livery my bene-" factor ſhall be pleaſed to order." She

ſpoke

ſpoke this with ſo much ſpleen, that mr. Goodman was a little nettled at it, and told her, that what his wife had done was out of kindneſs and good-will, which ſince ſhe did not take as was meant, ſhe ſhould have her money to do with as ſhe would.

"That is all I deſire," anſwered ſhe, "therefore be pleaſed to let me have twenty "guineas now, or, if there does not re- "main ſo much in your hands, I will "ask ſir Ralph to advance it, and you "may return it to him when you "ſettle accounts." "No, no," cried the merchant haſtily, "I ſee no reaſon to "trouble my good friend, ſir Ralph, on "ſuch a frivolous matter. You ſhall "have the ſum you mention, miſs Betſy, "whether ſo much remains out of the "hundred pounds a year ſet apart for "your ſubſiſtance, or not, as I can but "deduct it out of the next payment; but "I would have you manage with diſcre- "tion, for you may depend, that the ſur- "plus of what was at firſt agreed upon, "ſhall not be broke into, but laid up to "increaſe your fortune, which, by the "time you come of age, I hope, will be "pretty handſomely improved."

Miſs Betſy then aſſured him, that ſhe doubted not of his zeal for her intereſt,

and

and hoped ſhe had not offended him in any thing ſhe had ſaid. "No, no," replied he, "I always make allowances for "the little impatiencies of perſons of "your ſex and age, eſpecially when dreſs "is concerned." In ſpeaking theſe words, he opened his bureau, and took out twenty guineas, which he immediately gave her, making her firſt ſign a memorandum of it. Miſs Flora was all on fire to have offered ſomething in oppoſition to this, but durſt not do it, and the mantua-maker that inſtant coming in, ſhe went up ſtairs with her into her chamber, leaving miſs Betſy and mr. Goodman together; the former of whom, being eager to go about what ſhe intended, ordered a hackney coach to be called, and taking the ſilk with her, went directly to the ſhop where it was bought.

The mercer at firſt ſeemed unwilling to take it again; but on her telling him, ſhe would always make uſe of him, for every thing ſhe wanted in his way, and would then buy two ſuits of him, he at laſt conſented. As ſhe was extremely curious in every thing relating to her ſhape, ſhe made choice of a pink coloured French luſtring, to the end, that the plaits lying flat, would ſhew the beauty of her waiſte to more advantage; and to atone for the

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ſlightneſs of the ſilk, purchaſed as much of it as would flounce the ſleeves, and the petticoat from top to bottom: ſhe made the mercer alſo cut off a ſufficient quantity of a rich green Venetian ſattin, to make her a riding habit; and as ſhe came home bought a ſilver trimming for it of Point D' Eſpagne; all which, with the ſilk ſhe diſliked in exchange, did not amount to the money ſhe had received from mr. Goodman.

On her return, ſhe aſked the footman, who opened the door, if the mantua-maker was gone; but he not being able to inform her, ſhe ran haſtily up ſtairs, to miſs Flora's chamber, which, indeed, was alſo her own; for they lay together: ſhe was about to bounce in, but found the door was locked, and the key taken out on the inſide. This very much ſurpriſed her, eſpecially as ſhe thought ſhe had heard miſs Flora's voice, as ſhe was at the top of the ſtair-caſe: wanting, therefore, to be ſatisfied who was with her, ſhe went as ſoftly as ſhe could into lady Mellaſin's dreſſing-room, which was parted from the chamber but by a ſlight wainſcot: ſhe put her ear cloſe to the pannel, in order to diſcover the voices of them that ſpoke, and finding, by ſome light that came through a crack or flaw in the boards, her eyes, as well

well as ears, contributed to a diſcovery ſhe little expected. In fine, ſhe plainly perceived miſs Flora, and a man riſe off the bed; ſhe could not at firſt diſcern who he was, but, on his turning to go out of the room, knew him to be no other than Gayland. They went out of the chamber together, as gently as they could; and tho' miſs Betſy might, by taking three ſteps, have met them in the paſſage, and have had an opportunity of revenging herſelf on miſs Flora for the late airs ſhe had given herſelf, by ſhewing, how near ſhe was to the ſcene of infamy ſhe had been acting; yet the ſhock ſhe felt herſelf, on being witneſs of it, kept her immoveable for ſome time, and ſhe ſuffered them to depart without the mortification of thinking any one knew of their being together, in the manner they were.

This young lady, who though, as I have already taken notice, was of too volatile and gay a diſpoſition, hated any thing that had the leaſt tincture of indecency, was ſo much diſconcerted at the diſcovery ſhe had made, that ſhe had not power to ſtir from the place ſhe was in, much leſs to reſolve how to behave in this affair; that is, whether it would be beſt, or not, to let miſs Flora know ſhe was in the ſecret

cret of her ſhame, or to ſuffer her to think herſelf ſecure.

She was, however, beginning to meditate on this point, when ſhe heard miſs Flora come up ſtairs, calling at every ſtep, "miſs Betſy! — miſs Betſy! — where are "you?" Gayland was gone, and his young miſtreſs being told miſs Betſy was come home, gueſſed it was ſhe who had given an interruption to their pleaſures, by coming to the door; ſhe, therefore, as ſhe could not imagine her ſo perfectly convinced, contrived to diſguiſe the whole, and worſt of the truth, by revealing a part of it; and as ſoon as ſhe had found her, "Lord, miſs Betſy!" cried ſhe, with an unparalell'd aſſurance, "where have you "been? — how do you think I have been "ſerved by that curſed toad Gayland? "he came up into our chamber, where "the mantua-maker and I were, and as "ſoon as ſhe was gone, locked the door, "and began to kiſs and touze me ſo, that "I proteſt I was frighted almoſt out of "my wits. The devil meant no harm "though, I believe, for I got rid of him "eaſy enough; but I wiſh you had rapped "heartily at the door, and obliged him "to open it, that we both might have "rated him for his impudence." "Some "people have a great deal of impudence,

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" indeed," replied miſs Betſy, aſtoniſhed at her manner of bearing it off. " Aye, " ſo they have, my dear, rejoined the " other, with a careleſs air; but, prithee, " where have you been rambling by your " ſelf?" " No farther than Bedford- " ſtreet," anſwered miſs Betſy: " you may " ſee on what errand," continued ſhe, pointing to the ſilks, which ſhe had laid down on a chair. Miſs Flora preſently ran to the bundle, examined what it contained, and either being in a better humour, or affecting to be ſo, than when they talked on this head in the parlour, teſtified no diſapprobation of what ſhe had done; but, on the contrary, talked to her in ſuch ſoft obliging terms, that miſs Betſy, who had a great deal of good-nature, when not provoked by any thing that ſeemed an affront to herſelf, could not find in her heart to ſay any thing to give her confuſion.

When lady Mellaſin came home, and was informed how miſs Betſy had behaved, in relation to the ſilk, ſhe at firſt put on an air full of reſentment; but finding the other wanted neither wit nor ſpirit to defend her own cauſe, and not caring to break with her, eſpecially as her daughter was going with her to L——e, ſoon grew more moderate, and, at length, affected

affected to think no more of it. Certain it is, however, that this affair, ſilly as it was, and, as one would think, inſignificant in itſelf, lay broiling in the minds of both mother and daughter, and they waited only for an opportunity of venting their ſpite, in ſuch a manner, as ſhould not make them appear to have the leaſt tincture of ſo foul and mean a paſſion; but as neither of them were capable of a ſincere friendſhip, and had no real regard for any one beſide themſelves, their diſpleaſure was of little conſequence.

Preparations for the journey of the young ladies, ſeemed, for the preſent, to employ all their thoughts, and diligence enough was uſed to get every thing ready againſt the time prefixed, which wanted but three days of being expired, when an unforeſeen accident put an entire ſtop to it.

Miſs Betſy received a letter from her brother, mr. Francis Thoughtleſs, accompanied with another to mr. Goodman, acquainting them, that he had obtained leave from the head of the college, to paſs a month in London; that he ſhould ſet out from Oxford in two days, and hoped to enjoy the ſatisfaction of being with them in twelve hours after his letter. What

could ſhe now do? it would have been a ſin, not only againſt natural affection, but againſt the rules of common good manners, to have left the town, either on the news of his arrival, or immediately after it; nor could lady Truſty expect, or deſire ſhe ſhould entertain a thought of doing ſo: ſhe was too wiſe, and too good not to conſider the intereſt of families very much depended on the ſtrict union among the branches of it; and that the natural affection between brothers and ſiſters, could not be too much cultivated. Far, therefore, from inſiſting on the promiſe miſs Betſy had made of going with her into the country, ſhe congratulated her on the happy diſappointment, and told her, that ſhe ſhould receive her with a double ſatisfaction, if, after mr. Francis returned to Oxford, ſhe would come and paſs what then remained of the ſummer ſeaſon with her. This, miſs Betſy aſſured her ladyſhip, ſhe would do; ſo that, according to all appearance, the benefits ſhe might have received, by being under the eye of ſo excellent an inſtructreſs, were but delayed, not loſt.

CHAP.

CHAP. VIII.

Relates how, by a concurrence of odd circumſtances, miſs Betſy was brought pretty near the criſis of her fate, and the means by which ſhe eſcaped.

MR. Francis Thoughtleſs arrived in town the very evening before the day in which ſir Ralph Truſty and his lady were to ſet out for L———e. They had not ſeen this young gentleman ſince the melancholly occaſion of his father's funeral, and would have been glad to have had ſome time with him; but could no way put off their Journey, as word was ſent of the day in which they expected to be at home: ſir Ralph knew very well, that a great number of his tenants, and friends, would meet him on the road, and a letter would not reach them ſoon enough to prevent them from being diſappointed: they ſupped with him, however, at mr. Goodman's, who would not permit him to have any other home than his houſe, during his ſtay in town. Lady Truſty, on taking leave of miſs Betſy, ſaid to her, ſhe hoped ſhe would remember her promiſe when her brother was returned to Oxford; on

which ſhe replied, that ſhe could not be ſo much an enemy to her own happineſs as to fail.

Miſs Betſy and this brother had been always extremely fond of each other, and the length of time they had been aſunder, and the improvement which that time had made in both, heightened their mutual ſatisfaction in meeting.

All that troubled miſs Betſy now, was, that her brother happened to come to London at a ſeaſon of the year, in which he could not receive the leaſt ſatisfaction: the king was gone to Hanover, all the foreign miniſters, and great part of the nobility, attended him, and the reſt were retired to their country ſeats; ſo that an entire ſtop was put to all public diverſions worth ſeeing. There were no plays, no operas, no maſquerades, no balls, no public ſhews, except at the little theatre in the Hay-market, then known by the name of F———g's ſcandal-ſhop; becauſe he frequently exhibited there certain drolls, or, more properly, invectives againſt the miniſtry: in doing which it appears extremely probable, that he had two views; the one to get money, which he very much wanted, from ſuch as delighted in low humour, and could not diſtinguiſh true ſatire from ſcurrility; and the other,

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in the hope of having ſome poſt given him by thoſe whom he had abuſed, in order to ſilence his dramatic talent. But it is not my buſineſs to point out either the merit of that gentleman's performances, or the motives he had for writing them, as the town is perfectly acquainted both with his abilities and ſucceſs; and has ſince ſeen him, with aſtoniſhment, wriggle himſelf into favour, by pretending to cajole thoſe he had not the power to intimidate.

But though there were none of the diverſions I have mentioned, nor Ranelagh at that time thought of, nor Vauxhall, Mary-le-bone, nor Cuper's-gardens, in the repute they ſince have been, the young gentleman found ſufficient to entertain him: empty as the town was, lady Mellaſin was not without company, who made frequent parties of pleaſure, and when nothing elſe was to be found for recreation, cards filled up the void.

Nothing material enough to be inſerted in this hiſtory happened to miſs Betſy, during the time her brother ſtayed, till one evening, as the family were ſitting together, ſome diſcourſe concerning Oxford coming on the tapis, mr. Francis ſpoke ſo largely in the praiſe of the wholeſomeneſs

of the air, the many fine walks and gardens with which the place abounded, and the good company that were continually reſorting to it, that miſs Betſy cried out, ſhe longed to ſee it, — miſs Flora ſaid the ſame.

On this, the young gentleman gave them an invitation to go down with him, when he went, ſaying, they never could go at a better time, as both the aſſizes and races were to be in about a month. Miſs Betſy ſaid, ſuch a jaunt would vaſtly delight her. Miſs Flora ecchoed her approbation, and added, ſhe wiſhed my lady would conſent. "I have no objection to "make to it," replied lady Mellaſin, "as "you will have a conductor, who, I know, "will be very careful of you." Mr. Goodman's conſent was alſo aſked, for the ſake of form, though every one knew the opinion of his wife was, of itſelf, a ſufficient ſanction.

Though it is highly probable, that miſs Betſy was much better pleaſed with this journey, than ſhe would have been with that to L————e, yet ſhe thought herſelf obliged, both in gratitude and good manners, to write to lady Truſty, and make the beſt excuſe ſhe could for her breach

breach of promiſe, which ſhe did in theſe terms.

To lady TRUSTY.

Moſt dear and honoured madam,

" MY brother Frank being extremely
" deſirous of ſhewing miſs Flora and
" myſelf the curioſities of Oxford, has ob-
" tained leave from mr. Goodman, and
" lady Meilaſin, for us to accompany him
" to that place. I am afraid the ſeaſon
" will be too far advanced, for us to take
" a journey to L————e at our return;
" therefore flatter myſelf your ladyſhip
" will pardon the indiſpenſable neceſſity I
" am under of deferring, till next ſpring,
" the happineſs I propoſed in waiting on
" you. All here preſent my worthy guar-
" dian, and your ladyſhip, with their beſt
" reſpects. I beg mine may be equally
" acceptable, and that you will always
" continue to favour with your good
" wiſhes, her, who is,

" With the moſt perfect eſteem,

" Madam,

" Your ladyſhip's moſt obliged,

" And moſt obedient ſervant,

" E. THOUGHTLESS."

The time for the young gentleman's departure being arrived, they went together in the ſtage, attended by a footman of mr. Goodman's, whom lady Mellaſin would needs ſend with them, in order to give the young ladies an air of dignity.

They found, on their arrival at that juſtly celebrated ſeat of learning, that mr. Francis had given no greater eulogiums on it, than it merited: they were charmed with the fine library, the muſæum, the magnificence of the halls belonging to the ſeveral colleges, the phyſic-garden, and other curious walks; but that which above all the reſt gave the moſt ſatisfaction to miſs Betſy, as well as to her companion, was that reſpectful gallantry with which they found themſelves treated, by the gentlemen of the univerſity. Mr. Francis was extremely beloved amongſt them, on account of his affability, politeneſs, and good humour, and they ſeemed glad of an opportunity of ſhewing the regard they had for the brother, by paying all manner of aſſiduities to the ſiſter; he gave the ladies an elegant entertainment at his own rooms, to which alſo ſome of thoſe with whom he was the moſt intimate were invited. All theſe thought themſelves bound to return the ſame compliment: the company

pany of every one preſent were deſired to their reſpective apartments; and as each of theſe gentlemen had, beſides, other particular friends of their own, whom they wiſhed to oblige, the number of the gueſts were ſtill increaſed at every feaſt.

By this means, miſs Betſy and miſs Flora ſoon acquired a very large acquaintance, and as through the care of mr. Francis they were lodged in one of the beſt and moſt reputable houſes in town, their families known, and themſelves were young ladies who knew how to behave as well as dreſs, and receive company in the moſt elegant and polite manner, every one was proud of a pretence for viſiting them.

The reſpect paid to them would doubtleſs have every day increaſed, during the whole time they ſhould have thought proper to continue in Oxford, and on quitting it have left behind them the higheſt idea of their merit, if, by one inconſiderate action, they had not at once forfeited the eſteem they had gained, and rendered themſelves the ſubjects of ridicule, even to thoſe who before had regarded them with veneration.

They were walking out one day, about an hour or two before the time in which

they uſually dined, into the parks, where they were met by a gentleman-commoner, and a young ſtudent, both of whom they had been in company with at moſt of the entertainments beforementioned. The ſparks begged leave to attend them, which being readily granted, they walked all together for ſome time; but the weather being very warm, the gentleman-commoner took an occaſion to remind the ladies how much their beauty would be in danger of ſuffering from the immoderate rays of phœbus, and propoſed going to ſome gardens, full of the moſt beautiful alcoves and arbours, ſo ſhaded over, that the ſun, even in his meridian force, could, at the moſt, but glimmer through the delightful gloom: he painted the pleaſures of the place, to which he was deſirous of leading them, with ſo romantic an energy, that they immediately, and without the leaſt ſcruple or heſitation, conſented to be conducted thither.

This was a condeſcenſion, which he, who aſked it, ſcarce expected would be granted, and, on finding it ſo eaſily obtained, began to form ſome conjectures no way to the advantage of theſe ladies reputation. It is certain, indeed, that as he profeſſed a friendſhip for the brother, he ought not, in ſtrict honour, to have propoſed

poſed any thing to the ſiſter, which would be unbecoming her to agree to; but he was young, gay to an exceſs, and in what he ſaid, or did, not always took conſideration for his guide.

They went on laughing till they came to the place he mentioned, where the gentlemen having ſhewed their fair companions into the gardens, in which were, indeed, ſeveral receſſes, no leſs dark than had been deſcribed: on entering one of them miſs Betſy cried, "Bleſs me! this "is fit for nothing but for people to do "what they are aſhamed of in the light." "The fitter then, madam," replied the gentleman-commoner, "to encourage a "lover, who, perhaps, has ſuffered more "through his own timidity, than the "cruelty of the object he adores." He accompanied theſe words with a ſeizure of both her hands, and two or three kiſſes on her lips. The young ſtudent was no leſs free with miſs Flora; but neither of theſe ladies gave themſelves the trouble to reflect what conſequences might poſſibly attend a prelude of this nature, and repulſed the liberties they took in ſuch a manner, as made the offenders imagine they had not ſinned beyond a pardon.

they uſually dined, into the parks, where they were met by a gentleman-commoner, and a young ſtudent, both of whom they had been in company with at moſt of the entertainments beforementioned. The ſparks begged leave to attend them, which being readily granted, they walked all together for ſome time; but the weather being very warm, the gentleman-commoner took an occaſion to remind the ladies how much their beauty would be in danger of ſuffering from the immoderate rays of phœbus, and propoſed going to ſome gardens, full of the moſt beautiful alcoves and arbours, ſo ſhaded over, that the ſun, even in his meridian force, could, at the moſt, but glimmer through the delightful gloom: he painted the pleaſures of the place, to which he was deſirous of leading them, with ſo romantic an energy, that they immediately, and without the leaſt ſcruple or heſitation, conſented to be conducted thither.

This was a condeſcenſion, which he, who aſked it, ſcarce expected would be granted, and, on finding it ſo eaſily obtained, began to form ſome conjectures no way to the advantage of theſe ladies reputation. It is certain, indeed, that as he profeſſed a friendſhip for the brother, he ought not, in ſtrict honour, to have propoſed

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They would not, however, be prevailed on to ſtay, or even to ſit down in that darkſome receſs, but went back into a houſe, where they were ſhewn into a very pleaſant room, which commanded the whole proſpect of the garden, and was ſufficiently ſhaded from the ſun by jeſſamin and honeyſuckles, which grew againſt the windows: here wine, cakes, jellies, and ſuch like things being brought, the converſation was extremely lively, and full of gallantry, without the leaſt mixture of indecency.

The gentlemen exerted all their wit and eloquence, to perſwade the ladies not to go home in the heat of the day; but take up with ſuch entertainment as the place they were in was able to preſent them with. Neither of them made any objection, except that having ſaid they ſhould dine at home, the family would wait in expectation of their coming; but this difficulty was eaſily got over: the footman, who had attended miſs Betſy and miſs Flora, in their morning's walk, was in the houſe, and might be ſent to acquaint the people, that they were not to expect them. As they were neither diſpleaſed with the company, nor place they were in, they needed not abundance of perſwaſions,

and

and the ſervant was immediately diſpatched. The gentlemen went out of the room, to give orders for having ſomething prepared, but ſtaid not two minutes; and, on their return, omitted nothing that might keep up the good humour and ſprightlineſs of their fair companions.

Perſons of ſo gay and volatile a diſpoſition, as theſe four, could not content themſelves with ſitting ſtill, and barely talking, — every limb muſt be in motion, — every faculty employed. The gentleman-commoner took miſs Betſy's hand, and led her ſome ſteps of a minuette, then fell into a rigadoon, then into the louvre, and ſo ran through all the ſchool-dances, without regularly beginning or ending any one of them, or of the tunes he ſung: the young ſtudent was not leſs alert with miſs Flora; ſo that between ſinging, dancing, and laughing, they all grew extremely warm. Miſs Betſy ran to a window to take breath, and get a little air; her partner followed, and taking up her fan, which lay on a table, employed it with a great deal of dexterity, to aſſiſt the wind, that came in at the caſement for her refreſhment. "Heaven!" cried he, "how divinely lovely do you now appear? "the goddeſs of the ſpring, nor Venus's "ſelf, was ever painted half ſo beautiful.

"What

"What eyes!—what a mouth!—and "what a ſhape!" continued he, ſurveying her, as it were, from head to foot, "how exquiſitely turned!—how taper!—"how ſlender!—I don't believe you "meaſure half a yard round the waiſt." In ſpeaking theſe words, he put his handkerchief about her waiſt, after which he tied it round his head, repeating theſe lines of mr. Waller's:

"That which her ſlender waiſt confin'd
"Shall now my joyful temples bind;
"No monarch but would give his "crown,
"His arms might do what this has "done."

"O fie upon it," ſaid miſs Betſy, laughing, and ſnatching it from his head, "this poetry is ſtale, I ſhould rather have "expected from an Oxonian, ſome fine "thing of his own extempore, on this oc-"caſion; which, perhaps, I might have "been vain enough to have got printed "in the monthly magazines."

"Ah! madam," replied he, looking on her with dying languiſhments, "where "the heart is deeply affected, the brain "ſeldom produces any thing but incon-"gruous ideas. Had Sacariſſa been miſ-

"treſs

" treſs of the charms you are, or had " Waller loved like me, he had been leſs " capable of writing in the manner he " did."

The ſtudent perceiving his friend was entering into a particular converſation with miſs Betſy, found means to draw miſs Flora out of the room, and left them together, though this young lady afterwards proteſted, ſhe called to miſs Betſy to follow; but if ſhe did, it was in ſuch a low voice, that the other did not hear her, and continued her pleaſantry, rallying the gentleman-commoner, on every thing he ſaid, till he finding the opportunity he had of being revenged, ſoon turned his humble adoration into an air more free and natural to him. As ſhe was opening her mouth to utter ſome ſarcaſm or other, he catched her in his arms, and began to kiſs her with ſo much warmth and eagerneſs that ſurprized her; ſhe ſtruggled to get looſe, and called miſs Flora, not knowing ſhe was gone, to come to her aſſiſtance. The efforts ſhe made at firſt to oblige him to deſiſt, were not, however, quite ſo ſtrenuous as they ought to have been, on ſuch an occaſion; but finding he was about to proceed to greater liberties than any man before had ever taken with her, ſhe collected all her ſtrength, and broke from him,

him, when looking round the room, and ſeeing no-body there, "Bleſs me," cried ſhe, "what is the meaning of all this? — "where are our friends?" "They are "gone," ſaid he, "to pay the debt, "which love, and youth, and beauty chal- "lenge; let us not be remiſs, nor waſte "the precious moments in idle ſcruples. "Come, my angel!" purſed he, endea- vouring to get her once more into his arms, "make me the happieſt of mankind, "and be as divinely good as you are fair."

"I do not underſtand you, ſir," repli- ed ſhe, "but neither deſire, nor will ſtay "to hear an explanation." She ſpoke this with ſomewhat of an haughty air, and was making towards the door; but he was far from being intimidated, and, inſtead of ſuffering her to paſs, he ſeized her a little roughly with one hand, and with the other made faſt the door; "Come, come, my "dear creature," cried he, "no more re- "ſiſtance, you ſee you are in my power, "and the very name of being ſo, is ſuf- "ficent to abſolve you to yourſelf, for any "act of kindneſs you may beſtow upon "me; be generous then, and be aſſured it "ſhall be an inviolable ſecret."

She was about to ſay ſomething, but he ſtopped her mouth with kiſſes, and forced her

her to ſit down in a chair, where holding her faſt, her ruin had certainly been compleated, if a loud knocking at the door had not prevented him from proſecuting his deſign.

This was the brother of miſs Betſy, who having been at her lodgings, on his coming from thence met the footman, who had been ſent to acquaint the family the ladies would not dine at home: he aſked where his ſiſter was, and the fellow having told him, came directly to the place. A waiter of the houſe ſhewed him to the room; on finding it locked, he was ſtrangely amazed, and both knocked and called to have it opened, with a good deal of vehemence.

The gentleman-commoner knowing his voice, was ſhocked to the laſt degree; but quitted that inſtant his intended prey, and let him enter. Mr. Francis, on coming in, knew not what to think; he ſaw the gentleman in great diſorder, and his ſiſter in much more. "What is the meaning of "this," ſaid he: "Siſter, how came you "here?" "Aſk me no queſtions at pre-"ſent," replied ſhe, ſcarce able to ſpeak, ſo ſtrangely had her late fright ſeized on her ſpirits, "but ſee me ſafe from this "curſed houſe, and that worſt of men." Her ſpeaking in this manner, made mr. Francis

Francis apprehend the whole, and perhaps more than the truth. "How, ſir!" ſaid he, darting a furious look on the gentleman-commoner, "what is it I hear?—"have you dared to—?" "Whatever "I have dared to," interrupted the other, "I am capable of defending." "'Tis "well," rejoined the brother of miſs Betſy, "perhaps, I may put you to the trial; "but this is not a time or place." He then took hold of his ſiſter's hand, and led her down ſtairs; as they were going out, miſs Betſy ſtopping a little to adjuſt her dreſs, which was ſtrangely diſordered, ſhe bethought herſelf of miſs Flora, who, though ſhe was very angry with, ſhe did not chooſe to leave behind at the mercy of ſuch rakes, as ſhe had reaſon to think thoſe were, whom ſhe had been in company with. Juſt as ſhe was deſiring her brother to ſend a waiter in ſearch of that young lady, they ſaw her coming out of the garden, led by the young ſtudent, who, as ſoon as he beheld mr. Francis, cried, "ha! Frank, how came you here? "you look out of humour." "How I "came here, it matters not," replied he, ſullenly; "and as to my being out of "humour, perhaps you may know better "than I yet do, what cauſe I have for "being ſo."

He

He waited for no anſwer to theſe words, but conducted his ſiſter out of the houſe as haſtily as he could: miſs Flora followed, after having taken leave of her companion in what manner ſhe thought proper.

On their coming home, miſs Betſy related to her brother, as far as her modeſty would permit, all the particulars of this adventure, and ended with ſaying, that ſure it was heaven alone that gave her ſtrength to prevent the perpetration of the villain's intentions. Mr. Francis, all the time ſhe was ſpeaking, bit his lips, and ſhewed great tokens of an extraordinary diſturbance in his mind; but offered not the leaſt interruption. When he perceived ſhe had done, "well, ſiſter," ſaid he, "I "ſhall hear what he has to ſay, and will "endeavour to oblige him to aſk your "pardon;" and ſoon after took his leave.

Miſs Betſy did not very well comprehend his meaning in theſe words, and was, indeed, ſtill in too much confuſion to conſider on any thing; but what the conſequences were of this tranſaction the reader will preſently be informed of.

CHAP.

CHAP. IX.

Contains ſuch things as might be reaſonably expected, after the preceding adventure.

WHEN, in any thing irregular, and liable to cenſure, more perſons than one are concerned, how natural it is for each to accuſe the other, and it often happens, in this caſe, that the greateſt part of the blame falls on the leaſt culpable.

After mr. Francis had left the ladies, in order to be more fully convinced in this matter, and take ſuch meaſures as he thought would beſt become him for the reparation of the affront offered to the honour of his family, miſs Flora began to reproach miſs Betſy, for having related any thing of what had paſſed to her brother: "By your own account," ſaid ſhe, "no harm was done to you; but ſome "people love to make a buſtle about no-"thing." "And ſome people," replied miſs Betſy, tartly, "love nothing but the "gratifications of their own paſſions, and "having no ſenſe of virtue or modeſty "themſelves, can have no regard to that

"of

" of another." " What do you mean, " miſs?" cried the other, with a pert air. " My meaning is pretty plain," rejoined miſs Betſy; " but ſince you affect ſo much " ignorance, I muſt tell you, that the ex- " pectations of a ſecond edition of the " ſame work mr. Gayland had helped " you to compoſe, though from another " quarter, tempted you to ſneak out of " the room, and leave your friend in dan- " ger of falling a ſacrifice to what her " ſoul moſt deteſts and ſcorns." Theſe words ſtung miſs Flora to the quick; her face was in an inſtant covered with a ſcar- let bluſh, and every feature betrayed the confuſion of her mind; but recovering herſelf from it, much ſooner than moſt others of her age could have done: " Good " lack," cried ſhe, " I fancy you are ſet- " ting up for a prude; but pray, how " came mr. Gayland into your head? — " What, becauſe I told you he innocently " romped with me one day in the cham- " ber, are you ſo cenſorious as to infer " any thing criminal paſſed between us?" " Whatever I infer," replied miſs Betſy, diſdainfully, " I have better vouchers for " the truth of, than your report, and " would adviſe you, when you go home, " to get the chink in the pannel of the " wainſcot of my lady's dreſſing-room " ſtopped up, or your next rendezvous

" with

" with that gentleman, may poſſibly have " witneſſes of more ill-nature than my- " ſelf." " That can ſcarcely be," ſaid miſs Flora, ready to burſt with vexation; " but don't think I value your little ma- " lice; you are only angry becauſe he " ſlighted the advances you made him, " and took all opportunies to ſhew how " much his heart and judgment gave " the preference to me." Theſe words ſo piqued the vanity of miſs Betſy, that not able to bear ſhe ſhould continue in the imagination of being better liked than herſelf, though even by the man ſhe hated, told her the ſollicitations he had made to her, the letter ſhe had received from him, and the rebuff ſhe had given him upon it; " ſo that," purſued ſhe, " it was not " till after he found there was no hopes " of gaining me, that he carried his de- " voirs to you."

Miſs Flora was more nettled at this eclairciſement, than ſhe was at the diſcovery ſhe now perceived the other had made of her intrigue: ſhe pretended, however, not to believe a word of what ſhe had ſaid; but willing to evade all farther diſcourſe on that head, returned to the adventure they had juſt gone through with the Oxonians. " Never expect," ſaid ſhe, " to paſs it upon any one of " com-

" common-ſenſe, that if you had not a " mind to have been alone with that ter- " rible man, as you now deſcribe him, " you would have ſtaid in the room after " I was gone, and called to you to fol- " low."

It was in vain that miſs Betſy denied ſhe either heard her ſpeak, or knew any thing of her departure, till ſome time after ſhe was gone, and the gentleman-commoner began to uſe her with ſuch familiarities as convinced her he was ſenſible no witneſſes were preſent. This, though no more than truth, was of no conſequence to her juſtication, to one determined to believe the worſt, or, at leaſt, ſeem to do ſo: miſs Flora treated with contempt all ſhe ſaid on this ſcore, derided her imprecations, and to mortify her the more, ſaid to her, in a taunting manner: " Come, come, miſs Betſy, 'tis " a folly to think to impoſe upon the " world by ſuch ſhallow artifices: — what " your inclinations are is evident enough; " any one may ſee, that if it had not been " for your brother's unſeaſonable inter- " ruption, no-body would ever have " heard a word of thoſe inſults you now " ſo heavily complain of."

Poor

Poor miſs Betſy could not refrain letting fall ſome tears at ſo unjuſt and cruel an innuendo; but the greatneſs of her ſpirit enabled her in a few moments to overcome the ſhock it had given her: ſhe returned reproaches with reproaches, and as ſhe had infinitely more of truth and reaſon on her ſide, had alſo much the better in this combat of tongues, nevertheleſs the other would not give out; ſhe upbraided, and exaggerated, with the moſt malicious comments on it, every little indiſcretion miſs Betſy had been guilty of, repeated every cenſure which ſhe had heard the ill-natured part of the world paſs upon her conduct, and added many more, the invention of her own fertile brain.

Some ladies they had made acquaintance with in town coming to viſit them, put an end to the debate; but neither being able preſently to forget the bitter reflections caſt on her by the other, both remained extremely ſullen the whole night, and their mutual ill humour might poſſibly have laſted much longer, but for an accident more material, which took off their attention, as it might have produced much worſe conſequences than any quarrel between themſelves could be attended with. It happened in this manner:

The

The brother of miſs Betſy was of a fiery diſpoſition, and though thoſe who were entruſted with the care of his education, were not wanting in their pains to correct this propenſity, which they thought would be the more unbecoming in him, as he was intended for the pulpit, yet did not their endeavours for that purpoſe meet with all the ſucceſs they wiſhed. Nature may be moderated, but never can be wholly changed, the ſeeds of wrath ſtill remained in his ſoul, nor could the rudiments that had been given him be ſufficient to hinder them from ſpringing into action, when urged by any provocation. The treatment his ſiſter had received from the gentleman-commoner, ſeemed to him ſo juſtifiable a one, that he thought he ought not, without great ſubmiſſions on the part of the tranſgreſſor, be prevailed upon to put it up.

The firſt ſtep he took was to ſound the young ſtudent, as to what he knew relating to the affair, who freely told him, as miſs Betſy herſelf had done, where they met the ladies, and the manner in which they went into the houſe; proteſting, that neither himſelf, nor according to the beſt of his belief, the gentleman-commoner,

had at that time any deſigns in view, but meer complaiſance and gallantry.

"How then came you to ſeparate your-
"ſelves?" cried mr. Francis, with ſome earneſtneſs. "That alſo was accidental," replied the other: "your ſiſter's compa-
"nion telling me, ſhe liked the garden
"better than the room we were in, I
"thought I could do no leſs than attend
"her thither. I confeſs I did not con-
"ſult whether thoſe we left behind had
"any inclination to follow us or not."

The air with which he ſpoke of this part of the adventure, had ſomething in it, which did not give mr. Francis the moſt favourable idea of miſs Flora's conduct; but that not much concerning him, and finding nothing wherewith he could juſtly reproach the ſtudent, he ſoon after quitted him, and went to the gentleman-commoner, having been told he might find him in his rooms.

Had any one been witneſs of the manner in which theſe two accoſted each other, they would not have been at a loſs to gueſs what would enſue: the brother of miſs Betſy came with a mind full of reſentment, and determined to repair the affront had been offered to him in the perſon

perſon of a ſiſter, who was very dear to him, by calling the other to a ſevere account for what he had done. The gentleman-commoner was deſcended of a noble family, had an eſtate to ſupport the dignity of his birth, and was too much puffed up and inſolent on the ſmiles of fortune: he was conſcious the affront he had given demanded ſatisfaction, and neither doubted of the errand on which mr. Francis was come, nor wondered at it; but could not bring himſelf to acknowledge he had done amiſs, nor think of making any excuſe for his behaviour. Guilt in a proud heart is generally accompanied with a ſullen obſtinacy; for, as the poet ſays,

"Forgiveneſs to the injur'd does be-
"long;
"But they ne'er pardon who have done
"the wrong."

He, therefore, received the interrogatories mr. Francis was beginning to make, with an air rather indignant than complying, which the other not being able to brook, ſuch hot words aroſe between them, as could not but occaſion a challenge, which was given by mr. Francis. The appointment to meet was the next morning at ſix o'clock, and the place,

that very field in which the gentleman-commoner, and his friend had ſo unluckily happened to meet the ladies in their morning's walk.

Neither of them wanted courage, nor communicated their rendezvous to any one perſon, in hope of being diſappointed without danger of their honour; but each being equally animated with the ambition of humbling the arrogance of the other, both were ſecret as to the buſineſs, and no leſs punctual as to the time.

The agreement between them was ſword and piſtol, which both having provided themſelves with, they no ſooner came within a proper diſtance, than they diſcharged at each other, the firſt courſe of this fatal entertainment; that of the gentleman-commoner was ſo well aimed, that one of the bullets lodged in the ſhoulder, and the other grazing on the fleſhy part of the arm of his antagoniſt, put him into a great deal of pain; but theſe wounds rather increaſed than diminiſhed the fury he was poſſeſſed of; he inſtantly drew his ſword, and ran at the other with ſo well-directed a force, that his weapon entered three inches deep into the right ſide of the gentleman-commoner: both of them received ſeveral other hurts, yet ſtill both continued the fight with

equal

equal vehemence, nor would either of them, in all probability, have receded, till one or other of them had lain dead upon the place, if ſome countrymen, who by accident were paſſing that way, had not with their clubs beat down the ſwords of both, and carried the owners of them by meer force into the village they were going to, where they were no ſooner entered, than ſeveral people who knew them, ſeeing them paſs by in this manner, covered all over with their own blood, and guarded by a pack of ruſtics, ran out to enquire what had happened, which being informed of, they took them out of the hands of theſe men, and provided proper apartments for them.

By this time they were both extremely faint through the anguiſh of their wounds, and the great effuſion of blood that had iſſued from them. Surgeons were immediately ſent for, who on examining their hurts, pronounced none of them to be mortal, yet ſuch as would require ſome time for cure.

Mr. Francis ſuffered extreme torture in having the bullet extracted from his ſhoulder, yet notwithſtanding that, and the weak condition he was in, he made a ſervant ſupport him in his bed, while he

ſcrawled out theſe few lines to his ſiſter; which, as ſoon as finiſhed, were carried to her by the ſame perſon.

To miſs BETSY THOUGHTLESS.

" *My dear ſiſter*,

" I HAVE endangered my life, and am " now confined to my bed, by the " wounds I have received, in endeavour- " ing to revenge your quarrel: do not " think I tell you this by way of re- " proach; for, I aſſure you, would the " circumſtance of the affair have permit- " ted it to have been concealed, you ne- " ver ſhould have known it.

" I ſhould be glad to ſee you, but " think it not proper that you ſhould " come to me, 'till I hear what is ſaid " concerning this matter. I ſhall ſend " to you every day; and that you will " be perfectly eaſy, is the earneſt requeſt " of,

" Dear Betſy,

" Your moſt affectionate brother,

" And humble ſervant,

" F. THOUGHTLESS."

The

The young ladies were that morning at breakfaſt in the parlour, with the gentlewoman of the houſe, when the maid came running in, and told her miſtreſs, ſhe had heard, in a ſhop where ſhe had been, of a ſad accident that had juſt happened: "Two gentlemen," cried ſhe, "of the "univerſity have been fighting, and al-"moſt killed one another; and they ſay," continued ſhe, "it was about a young "lady, that one of them attempted to "raviſh."

Miſs Betſy and miſs Flora, at this intelligence, looked at each other with a good deal of confuſion, already beginning to ſuſpect who the perſons were, and how deeply themſelves, one of them eſpecially, was intereſted in this misfortune. The gentlewoman aſked her ſervant, if ſhe knew the names of thoſe who fought: "No, "madam," anſwered ſhe, "I could not "learn that, as yet; but the people in "the ſtreet are all talking of it, and I "do not doubt but I ſhall hear the whole "ſtory the next time I go out."

The good gentlewoman, little imagining how much her gueſts were concerned in what ſhe ſpake, could not now forbear lamenting the ungovernableneſs of youth;

the heedleſs levities of the one ſex, and the mad-brained paſſions of the other. The perſons to whom ſhe directed this diſcourſe would not, at another time, have given much ear to it, or perhaps have replied to it with raillery; but the occaſion of it now put both of them in too ſerious a temper to offer any interruption, and ſhe was ſtill going on, inveighing againſt the follies and vices of the age, when miſs Betſy received the above letter from her brother, which confirmed all thoſe alarming conjectures the maid's report had raiſed in her mind.

The miſtreſs of the houſe perceiving the young man, who brought the letter, came upon buſineſs to the ladies, had the good manners to leave the room, that they might talk with the greater freedom. Miſs Betſy aſked a thouſand queſtions, but he was able to inform her of no farther particulars, than what the letter contained.

The moment he was gone, ſhe ran up to her chamber, threw herſelf upon the bed, and, in a flood of tears, gave a looſe to the moſt poignant vexation ſhe had ever yet experienced. Miſs Flora followed, and ſeeing her in this condition, thought ſhe could do no leſs, in decency, than

than contribute every thing in her power for her conſolation.

By the behaviour of this young lady, in other reſpects, however, the reader will eaſily perceive it was more through policy than real good-nature, ſhe treated her afflicted companion with the tenderneſs ſhe now did: ſhe knew, that it was not by an open quarrel with miſs Betſy ſhe could wreak any part of the ſpite ſhe had conceived againſt her, and was therefore glad to lay hold of this opportunity of being reconciled.

"I was afraid, my dear," ſaid ſhe, "that it would come to this, and that "put me into ſo great a paſſion with you "yeſterday, for telling mr. Francis any "thing of the matter: the men are ſuch "creatures, that there is no truſting them "with any thing; but come," continued ſhe, kiſſing her cheek, "don't grieve and "torment yourſelf in this manner, you "find there is no danger of death on "either ſide, and as for the reſt it will "all blow off in time." Miſs Betſy ſaid little to this, the ſudden paſſion of her ſoul muſt have its vent; but when that was over, ſhe began to liſten to the voice of comfort, and, by degrees, to reſume her natural vivacity, not foreſeeing that

this unhappy adventure would lay her under mortifications, which to a perſon of her ſpirit were very difficult to be borne.

CHAP. X.

Gives the cataſtrophe of the Oxford ramble, and in what manner the young ladies returned to London.

IF the wounds mr. Francis had received had been all the misfortune attending miſs Betſy in this adventure, it is probable, that as ſhe every day heard he was in a fair way of recovering, the firſt guſt of paſſion would have been all ſhe had ſuſtained; but ſhe ſoon found other conſequences ariſing from it, which were no leſs afflicting, and more galling to her pride.

The quarrel between the two young gentlemen, and the occaſion of it, was preſently blazed over the whole town; it ſpread like wild-fire, every one made their ſeveral comments upon it, and few there were who endeavoured to find any excuſes for the ſhare miſs Betſy and miſs Flora had in it.

The

The ladies of Oxford are commonly more than ordinarily circumſpect in their behaviour, as indeed it behoves them to be, in a place where there are ſuch a number of young gentlemen, many of whom purſue pleaſure more than ſtudy, and ſcruple nothing for the gratification of their deſires. It is not, therefore, to be wondered at, that being from their infancy trained up in the moſt ſtrict reſerve, and accuſtomed to be upon their guard, againſt even the moſt diſtant approaches of the other ſex, they ſhould be apt to paſs the ſevereſt cenſures on a conduct, which they had been always taught to look upon as the ſure deſtruction of reputation, and frequently fatal to innocence and virtue.

This being pretty generally the characteriſtic of thoſe ladies, who were of any diſtinction, in Oxford, miſs Betſy and miſs Flora immediately found, that while they continued there, they muſt either be content to ſit at home alone, or converſe only with ſuch as were as diſagreeable to them, as they had now rendered themſelves to thoſe of a more unblemiſhed fame.

They had received ſeveral viſits, all of which they had not yet had time or leiſure to return; but now going to pay the debt, which complaiſance demanded from them, they were denied acceſs at every place they went to: all the perſons were either abroad or indiſpoſed; but the manner in which theſe anſwers were given, eaſily convinced miſs Betſy and miſs Flora, that they were no more than meer pretences to avoid ſeeing them. In the public walks, and in paſſing through the ſtreets, they ſaw themſelves ſhunned even to a degree of rudeneſs: thoſe of their acquaintance, who were obliged to meet them, looked another way, and went haſtily on without vouchſafing a ſalute.

This was the treatment their late unhappy adventure drew on them, from thoſe of their own ſex, nor did thoſe of the other ſeem to behave to them with greater tenderneſs or reſpect, eſpecially the younger ſtudents, who all having got the ſtory, thought they had a fine opportunity of exerciſing their poetic talent; ſatires and lampoons flew about like hail: many of theſe anonymous compoſitions were directed to miſs Betſy, and thrown over the rails into the area of the houſe where ſhe lodged; others were ſung under her windows

dows by perſons in diſguiſe, and copies of them handed about through the whole town, to the great propagation of ſcandal, and the ſneering faculty.

Never, certainly, did pride and vanity meet with a more ſevere humiliation, than what theſe witicisms inflicted on thoſe, who by their inconſiderate behaviour had laid themſelves open to them. Neither the aſſurance of miſs Flora, nor the great ſpirit of miſs Betſy, could enable them to ſtand the ſhock of thoſe continual affronts, which every day preſented them with. They dreaded to expoſe themſelves to freſh inſults, if they ſtirred out of the doors, and at home they were perſecuted with the unwearied remonſtrances of their grave landlady, ſo that their condition was truly pitiable.

Both of them were equally impatient to get out of a place where they found their company was held in ſo little eſtimation; but miſs Betſy thought her brother would not take it well, ſhould ſhe go to London, and leave him in the condition he then was. Miſs Flora's importunities, however, joined to the new occaſions ſhe every day had for increaſing her diſcontent on ſtaying, got the better of her apprehenſions,

ſions, and ſhe wrote to her brother in the following terms:

To mr. FRANCIS THOUGHTLESS.

" *Dear brother*,

" THOUGH I am not to my great affliction permitted to ſee you, or offer that aſſiſtance might be expected from a ſiſter in your preſent ſituation; yet I cannot, without the extremeſt regret, reſolve to quit Oxford, before you are perfectly recovered of thoſe hurts you have received on my account. However, as by your judging it improper for me to come to you, I cannot ſuppoſe you are wholly unacquainted with the ſevere uſage lately given me, and muſt look on every affront offered to me as an indignity to you, I am apt to flatter myſelf you will not be offended, that I wiſh to remove from a place, where innocence is no defence againſt ſcandal, and the ſhew of virtue more conſidered than the reality.

" Nevertheleſs, I ſhall determine nothing, till I hear your ſentiments, which, if I find conformable to mine, ſhall ſet out for London with all poſſible expedition. I would very fain ſee you before I go, and, if you conſent,

" will

" will come to you ſo muffled up, as not to
" be known, by any who may happen to
" meet me. I ſhall expect your anſwer
" with the utmoſt impatience, being,

" My dear brother,

" By friendſhip, as well as blood,

" Moſt affectionately yours,

" E. THOUGHTLESS."

When this letter was diſpatched, miſs Flora made uſe of all the arguments ſhe was miſtreſs of, in order to perſwade miſs Betſy to go for London, even in caſe her brother ſhould not be altogether ſo willing for it, as ſhe wiſhed he would. Miſs Betſy, though no leſs eager than herſelf to be out of a place ſhe now ſo much deteſted, would not be prevailed upon to promiſe any thing on this ſcore; but perſiſted in her reſolution of being wholly directed how to proceed, by the anſwer ſhe ſhould receive from mr. Francis.

Miſs Flora was ſo fretted at this perverſeneſs, as ſhe called it, that ſhe told her, in a very great pet, that ſhe might ſtay if ſhe pleaſed, and be the laughing-ſtock of the town; but, for her own part, ſhe had more ſpirit, and would be gone the

the next day. Miſs Betſy cooly replied, that if ſhe thought proper to do ſo, ſhe was doubtleſs at liberty; but believed mr. Goodman, and even lady Mellaſin herſelf, would look on ſuch a behaviour, as neither conſiſtent with generoſity, or common good manners.

It is indeed ſcarce probable, that the other had the leaſt intention to do as ſhe had ſaid, though ſhe ſtill continued to threaten it, in the moſt poſitive and peremptory terms; and this, if we conſider the temper of both theſe young ladies, we may reaſonably ſuppoſe, might have occaſioned a ſecond quarrel between them, if the ſervant, whom mr. Francis always ſent to his ſiſter, had not that inſtant come in, and put an end to the diſpute, by delivering a letter to miſs Betſy, which ſhe haſtily opening, found it contained theſe lines:

To miſs THOUGHTLESS.

" *My dear ſiſter*,

" IT is with an inexpreſſible ſatisfaction " that I find your own inclinations " have anticipated the requeſt I was juſt " about to make you. I do aſſure you, " the

" the moment I received your letter, I
" was going to write, in order to per-
" ſwade you to do the very thing you
" ſeem to deſire. Oxford is indeed a very
" cenſorious place; I have always ob-
" ſerved it to be ſo, and have fre-
" quently told the ladies, between jeſt and
" earneſt, that I thought it was a town
" of the moſt ſcandal, and leaſt ſin, of
" any in the world. I am pretty confi-
" dent ſome of thoſe, who pretend to give
" themſelves airs concerning you and
" miſs Flora, are as perfectly convinced
" of your innocence as I myſelf am; yet
" after all that has happened, I would
" not have you think of ſtaying; and the
" ſooner you depart the better: you need
" be under no apprehenſions on account
" of my wounds; thoſe I received from
" the ſword of my antagoniſt are in a
" manner healed, and that with the piſtol
" ſhot, in my ſhoulder, is in as fine a
" way as can be expected, in ſo ſhort a
" time. Thoſe I had the fortune to give
" him, are in yet a better condition; ſo
" that I believe, if it was not for the over
" caution of our ſurgeon, we might both
" quit our rooms to-morrow. I hear that
" our grave ſuperiors have had ſome con-
" ſultations on our duel, and that there
" is a talk of our being both expelled;

" but,

" but, for my part, I ſhall certainly ſave
" them the trouble, and quit the univer-
" ſity of my own accord, as ſoon as my
" recovery is compleated: my genius is
" by no means adapted to the ſtudy of
" divinity; I think the care of my own
" ſoul more than ſufficient for me, with-
" out taking upon me the charge of a
" whole pariſh: you may, therefore, ex-
" pect to ſee me ſhortly at London, as it
" is highly neceſſary I ſhould conſult mr.
" Goodman concerning my future ſettle-
" ment in the world. I ſhould be ex-
" tremely glad of a viſit from you before
" you leave Oxford, more eſpecially as I
" have ſomething of moment to ſay to
" you, which I do not chooſe to com-
" municate by letter; but cannot think
" it at all proper, for particular reaſons,
" that you ſhould come to me, ſome or
" other of the gentlemen being perpetu-
" ally dropping into my chamber; and
" it is impoſſible for you to diſguiſe your-
" ſelf ſo as not to be diſtinguiſhed by
" young fellows, whoſe curioſity would be
" the more excited, by your endeavours to
" conceal yourſelf. As this might revive
" the diſcourſe of an affair, which I could
" wiſh might be buried in an eternal ob-
" livion, muſt deſire you will defer the
" ſatisfaction you propoſe to give me, till
" we meet at London, to which I wiſh

" you

" you, and your fair companion, a ſafe " and pleaſant journey. I am,

" With the greateſt tenderneſs,

" My dear ſiſter,

" Your affectionate brother,

" F. THOUGHTLESS."

The receipt of this letter gave an infinity of contentment to miſs Betſy; ſhe had made the offer of going to take her leave of him, chiefly with the view of keeping him from ſuſpecting ſhe wanted natural affection, and was no leſs pleaſed with his refuſing the requeſt ſhe made him on that account, than ſhe was with his ſo readily agreeing to her returning to London. Miſs Flora was equally delighted; they ſent their footman that inſtant to take places in the ſtage-coach, and early the next morning ſet out from a place, which, on their entering into it, they did not imagine they ſhould quit, either ſo ſoon, or with ſo little regret.

CHAP.

CHAP. XI.

Lays a foundation for many events to be produced by time, and waited for with patience.

MISS Betſy, and miſs Flora, on their coming home, were in ſome perplexity how to relate the ſtory of their Oxford adventure to lady Mellaſin and mr. Goodman; and it is very likely they would have thought proper to have kept it a ſecret, if the unlucky duel between mr. Francis, and the gentleman-commoner, which they were ſenſible would be a known thing, had not rendered the concealment of the whole utterly impracticable.

As there was no remedy, miſs Flora took upon her to lay open the matter to her mamma; which ſhe did with ſo much artifice, that if that lady had been as auſtere, as ſhe was really the reverſe, ſhe could not have found much to condemn, either in the conduct of her daughter, or miſs Betſy: as to mr. Goodman, he left the whole management of the young ladies, in theſe particulars, entirely to his wife, ſo ſaid little to them on their ſhare of the ad-

adventure; but was extremely concerned for the part mr. Francis had in it, as he ſuppoſed it was chiefly owing to that unlucky incident, that he had taken a reſolution to leave the college; and he very well knew, that a certain nobleman, who was a diſtant relation of his family, and godfather to mr. Francis, had always promiſed to beſtow a large benefice, in his gift, upon him, as ſoon as he ſhould have compleated his ſtudies.

This honeſt guardian thought he ſhould be wanting in the duty of the truſt repoſed in him, to ſuffer his charge to throw away that fine proſpect in his view, if by any means he could prevent him from taking ſo raſh and inconſiderate a ſtep: and as to his being expelled, he doubted not, but, between him and ſir Ralph, intereſt might be made to the heads of the univerſity, to get the affair of the duel paſſed over. The greateſt difficulty he had to apprehend, in compaſſing this point, was from the young gentleman himſelf, who he had obſerved was of a temper ſomewhat obſtinate, and tenacious of his own opinion: reſolving, however, to try all means poſſible, he wrote immediately to him, repreſenting to him, in the ſtrongeſt and moſt pathetic terms he was maſter of, the vaſt advantages the clergy enjoyed, the reſpect

reſpect they had from all degrees of people, and endeavoured to convince him, that there was no avocation whatever, by which a younger brother might ſo eaſily advance his fortune, and do honour to his family.

He alſo ſent a letter to ſir Ralph Truſty, acquainting him with the whole ſtory, and earneſtly requeſting, that he would write to mr. Francis, and omit nothing that might engage him to deſiſt from doing a thing ſo contrary to his intereſt, and the intentions of his deceaſed father, as what he now had thoughts of doing was manifeſtly ſo. Theſe efforts, by both the guardians, were often repeated; but without the leaſt ſucceſs: the young gentleman found arguments to oppoſe againſt theirs, which neither of them could deny to have weight, particularly that of his having no call to take upon him holy orders. During theſe debates, in which miſs Betſy gave herſelf no manner of concern, ſhe received a letter from her brother, containing theſe lines:

To miſs BETSY THOUGHTLESS.

'*My dear ſiſter*,

'THOUGH I flatter myſelf all my 'letters afford you ſome ſort of ſa-'tisfaction, yet by what little judgment 'I have been able to form of the tem-

'per

'per of your ſex, have reaſon to believe, 'this I now ſend will meet a double por- 'tion of welcome from you. It brings 'a confirmation of your beauty's power; 'the intelligence of a new conqueſt; the 'offer of a heart, which, if you will truſt 'a brother's recommendation, is well de- 'ſerving your acceptance: but, that I 'may not ſeem to ſpeak in riddles, you 'may remember, that the firſt time I 'had the pleaſure of entertaining you at 'my rooms, a gentleman called Trueworth, 'was with us, and that the next day, when 'you dined with that perſon, who after- 'wards treated you with ſuch unbecoming 'liberties, he made one of the company; 'ſince then you could not ſee him, as he 'was obliged to go to his ſeat, which is 'about thirty miles off, on an extraordi- 'nary occaſion, and returned not till the 'day after you left this town. He ſeem- 'ed more than ordinarily affected, on my 'telling him what had happened, on your 'account, and after pauſing a little, 'How "unhappy was I,' ſaid he, 'to be abſent! "had I been here, there would have been "no need for the brother of miſs Betſy "to have expoſed his life to the ſword of "an injurious antagoniſt, or his character "to the cenſure of the univerſity. I "would have taken upon myſelf to have "revenged the quarrel of that amiable

"lady,

" lady, and either have ſeverely chaſtiſed " the inſolence of the aggreſſor, or loſt " the beſt part of my blood in the at- " tempt.' I was very much ſurprized at ' theſe words, as well as at the emphaſis ' with which they were delivered; but ' recovering myſelf as ſoon as I could, " We are extremely obliged to you, ſir,' ' ſaid I; ' but I know not if ſuch a miſ- " taken generoſity, might not have been " fatal to the reputation of us both. What " would the world have ſaid of me to " have been tamely paſſive, and ſuffer " another to revenge the affront offered " to my ſiſter? What would they have " thought of her, on finding her honour " vindicated by one who had no concern " in it?' ' No concern!' cried he, with ' the utmoſt eagerneſs; ' yes, I have a " concern, more deep, more ſtrong, than " that of father, brother, or all the ties " of blood could give; and that you had " before now have been convinced of, had " I not been ſo ſuddenly and ſo unfortu- " nately called hence.'

' Perceiving I looked very much con- ' founded, as well I might, ' Ah! Frank,' ' cried he, ' I love your charming ſiſter: " my fricnds have, for theſe ſix months " paſt, been teizing me to think of mar- " riage, and ſeveral propoſals have been

" made

" made to me on that ſcore; but never,
" 'till I ſaw the amiable miſs Betſy, did
" I behold the face for whom I would
" exchange my liberty: in fine, 'tis ſhe,
" and only ſhe, can make me bleſt; and
" I returned to Oxford full of the hopes
" of an opportunity to lay my heart, my
" perſon, and my fortune at her feet.'

'It would require a volume inſtead of
'a letter, to repeat half the tender and
'paſſionate expreſſions he uttered in your
'favour. What I have already ſaid is
'enough to give you a ſpecimen of the
'reſt. I ſhall only add, that being im-
'patient to begin the attack he is deter-
'mined to make upon your heart, he is
'preparing to follow you to London with
'all poſſible expedition. I once had
'thoughts of accompanying him, but
'have ſince thought it proper to have ſir
'Ralph Truſty's advice in ſomething I
'have a mind to do, and for that pur-
'poſe ſhall take a journey into L——e,
'as ſoon as I receive remittances from mr.
'Goodman, to pay off ſome trifling debts
'I have contracted here, and defray my
'travelling expences; ſo that, if things
'happen as I wiſh they may, my friend's
'paſſion will have made a conſiderable
'progreſs before I ſee you.

'Indeed, my dear ſiſter, if you have 'not already ſeen a man whoſe perſon 'you like better, you can never have an 'offer that promiſes more felicity: he 'left the college ſoon after I came into 'it, beloved and reſpected by all that 'knew him, for his diſcreet behaviour, 'humanity, and affability: he went after-'wards on his travels, and brought home 'with him all the accompliſhments of the 'ſeveral countries he had been in, with-'out being the leaſt tainted with the vices 'or fopperies of any of them: he has a 'much larger eſtate than your fortune 'could expect, unincumbered with debts, 'mortgages, or poor relations: his fami-'ly is ancient, and, by the mother's ſide, 'honourable; but, above all, he has ſenſe, 'honour, and good nature,—rare qualities! 'which, in my opinion, cannot fail of 'making him an excellent huſband, when-'ever he comes to be ſuch.

'But I ſhall leave him to plead his own 'cauſe, and you to follow your inclina-'tions. I am,

'With the moſt unfeigned good wiſhes,

'My dear ſiſter,

'Your affectionate brother,

'And humble ſervant,

'F. THOUGHTLESS.

'P.S.

'P.S. Mr. Trueworth knows nothing of 'my writing to you in his behalf, ſo 'you are at liberty to receive him as 'you ſhall think proper.'

Miſs Betſy required no leſs a cordial than this, to revive her ſpirits, pretty much depreſſed ſince her ill uſage at Oxford.

She had not time, however, to indulge the pleaſure of reflecting on this new triumph, on her firſt receiving the news of it. Lady Mellaſin had ſet that evening apart to make a grand viſit to a perſon of her acquaintance, who was juſt married; the young ladies were to accompany her, and miſs Betſy was in the midſt of the hurry of dreſſing, when the poſt brought the letter, ſo ſhe only looked it careleſsly over, and locked it in her cabinet till ſhe ſhould have more leiſure for the examination.—They were all ready, the coach with the beſt hammock-cloth and harneſſes was at the door, and only waited while mrs. Prinks was drawing on her lady's gloves, which happened to be a little too ſtrait.

In this unlucky inſtant one of the footmen came running into the parlour, and told lady Mellaſin, that there was a very

ill-looking woman at the door, who enquired for her ladyſhip, ſaid ſhe muſt needs ſpeak with her, and that ſhe had a letter to deliver, which ſhe would give into nobody's hand but her own. Lady Mellaſin ſeemed a little angry at the inſolence and folly of the creature, as ſhe then termed it; but ordered ſhe ſhould be ſhewed into the back parlour: they were not above five minutes together, before the woman went away, and lady Mellaſin returned to the room where miſs Betſy and miſs Flora were waiting for her. A confuſion not to be deſcribed ſat on every feature in her face, ſhe looked pale, ſhe trembled, and having told the young ladies ſomething had happened, which prevented her going where ſhe intended, flew up into her dreſſing-room, followed by mrs. Prinks, who appeared very much alarmed at ſeeing her ladyſhip in this diſorder.

Miſs Betſy and miſs Flora were alſo ſurpriſed, and doubtleſs had their own conjectures upon this ſudden turn. 'Tis not likely, however, that either of them, eſpecially miſs Betſy, could hit upon the right; but whatever their thoughts were, they communicated them not to each other, and ſeemed only intent on conſidering in what manner they ſhould diſpoſe of themſelves

ſelves that evening, it not being proper they ſhould make the viſit above mentioned without her ladyſhip. As they were diſcourſing on this head, mrs. Prinks came down, and having ordered the coach to put up, and ſent a footman to call a hack, ran up ſtairs again, in a great hurry, to her lady.

In leſs time than could almoſt be imagined they both came down; lady Mellaſin had pulled off her rich apparel, and mobbed herſelf up in a cloak and hood, that little of her face, and nothing of her air, could be diſtinguiſhed: the two young ladies ſtared, and were confounded at this metamorphoſis. "Is your ladyſhip go-"ing out in that dreſs," cried miſs Flora; but miſs Betſy ſaid nothing. "Aye, "child," replied the lady, ſomewhat faultering in her ſpeech, "a poor relation, who "they ſay is dying, has ſent to beg to ſee "me." She ſaid no more, the hackney-coach was come, her ladyſhip and mrs. Prinks ſtepped haſtily into it; the latter, in doing ſo, telling the coachman, in ſo low a voice, as no-body but himſelf could hear, to what place he was to drive.

After they were gone, miſs Flora propoſed walking in the park; but miſs Betſy did not happen to be in a humour to go,

either there or any where elſe, at that time, on which the other told her, ſhe had got the ſpleen; but ſaid ſhe, "I am "reſolved not to be infected with it, ſo "you muſt not take it ill if I leave you "alone for a few hours; for I ſhould "think it a ſin againſt common-ſenſe, "to ſit moping at home without ſhewing "myſelf to any one ſoul in the world, "after having taken all this pains in "dreſſing." Miſs Betſy aſſured her, as ſhe might do with a great deal of ſincerity, that ſhe ſhould not be at all diſpleaſed to be entirely free from any company whatſoever for the whole evening; and to prove the truth of what ſhe ſaid, gave orders that inſtant to be denied to whoever ſhould come to viſit her. "Well," cried miſs Flora, laughing, "I ſhall give "your compliments, however, where I "am going," and then mentioned the "names of ſome perſons ſhe had juſt then taken into her head to viſit. "As you "pleaſe for that," replied miſs Betſy, with the ſame gay air; "but don't tell "them it is becauſe I am eaten up with "the vapours, that I chooſe to ſtay at "home rather than carry my compliments "in perſon; for if ever I find out," continued ſhe, "that you are ſo miſchievous, "I ſhall contrive ſome way or other to "be revenged on you."

They

They talked to each other in this pleaſant manner, 'till a chair miſs Flora had ſent for was brought into the hall, in which ſhe ſeated herſelf for her intended ramble, and miſs Betſy went into her chamber, where how ſhe was amuſed will preſently be ſhewn.

CHAP. XII.

Is little more than a continuance of the former.

MISS Betſy had no ſooner diſengaged herſelf from the incumbrance of a formal dreſs, and put on one more light and eaſy, al freſco, as the Spaniards phraſe it, than ſhe began to give her brother's letter a more ſerious and attentive peruſal, than ſhe had the opportunity of doing before.

She was charmed and elated with the deſcription mr. Francis had told her, ſhe had inſpired in the breaſt of his friend; ſhe called to her mind the idea of thoſe perſons who were preſent at the entertainments he mentioned, and eaſily recollected which was moſt likely to be the lover,

though ſhe remembered not the name: ſhe very well now remembered there was one that ſeemed both times to regard her with glances, which had ſomewhat peculiar in them, and which then ſhe had interpreted as the certain indications of feeling ſomething in his heart of the nature her brother had deſcribed; but not ſeeing him afterwards, nor hearing any mention made of him, at leaſt that ſhe took notice of, the imagination went out of her head.

This account of him, however, brought to her memory every thing ſhe had obſerved concerning him, and was very well convinced ſhe had ſeen nothing, either in his perſon or deportment, that was not perfectly agreeable; yet notwithſtanding all this, and the high encomiums given of him by a brother, who ſhe knew would not deceive her, ſhe was a little vexed to find herſelf preſſed by one ſo dear, and ſo nearly related to her, to think of him as a man ſhe ever intended to marry: ſhe thought ſhe could be pleaſed to have ſuch a lover, but could not bring herſelf to be content that he ever ſhould be a huſband. She had too much good ſenſe not to know it ſuited not with the condition of a wife to indulge herſelf in the gaieties ſhe at preſent did, which though in-

innocent, and, as ſhe thought, becoming enough in the preſent ſtate ſhe now was, might not be altogether pleaſing to one, who, if he ſo thought proper, had the power of reſtraining them. In fine, ſhe looked upon a ſerious behaviour as unſuitable to one of her years, and therefore reſolved not to enter into a condition, which demanded ſome ſhare of it, at leaſt for a long time; that is, when ſhe ſhould be grown weary of the admiration, flatteries, and addreſſes of the men, and no longer found any pleaſure in ſeeing herſelf preferred before all the women of her acquaintance.

Though it is certain, that few young handſome ladies are without ſome ſhare of the vanity here deſcribed, yet it is to be hoped, there are not many who are poſſeſſed of it in that immoderate degree miſs Betſy was. It is, however, for the ſake of thoſe who are ſo, that theſe pages are wrote, to the end they may uſe their utmoſt endeavours to correct that error, as they will find it ſo fatal to the happineſs of one, who had ſcarce any other blameable propenſity in her whole compoſition.

This young lady was full of meditations on her new conqueſt, and the manner in

which ſhe ſhould receive the victim, who was ſo ſhortly to proſtrate himſelf at the ſhrine of her beauty, when ſhe heard ſome body run haſtily up ſtairs, and go into lady Mellaſin's dreſſing-room, which being, as has been already taken notice of, on a very remarkable occaſion, ſhe ſtepped out of the chamber to ſee who was there, and found mrs. Prinks very buſy at a cabinet, where her lady's Jewels were always kept: "So, mrs. Prinks," ſaid ſhe, "is my lady come home?" "No, miſs," replied the other, "her ladyſhip is certainly the moſt compaſſionate beſt woman in the world; her couſin is very bad indeed, and ſhe has ſent me for a bottle of reviving drops, which I am going back to carry." With theſe words ſhe ſhuffled ſomething into her pocket, and having locked the cabinet again, went out of the room, ſaying, "Your ſervant, miſs Betſy, I cannot ſtay, for life's at ſtake."

This put miſs Betſy in the greateſt conſternation imaginable; ſhe knew lady Mellaſin could have no drops in that Cabinet, unleſs they were contained in a phial of no larger circumference than a thimble, the drawers of it being very ſhallow, and made only to hold rings, croceats, necklaces, and ſuch other flat trinkets: ſhe thought

thought there was ſomething very odd, and extraordinary in the whole affair. A ſtrange woman coming in ſo abrupt a manner, — her refuſing to give the letter to any one but lady Mellaſin herſelf, — her ladyſhip's confuſion at the receipt of it, — her diſguiſing herſelf, and going out with Prinks in that violent hurry, — the latter being ſent home, — her taking ſomething out of the caſket, and her going back again; all theſe incidents, I ſay, when put together, denoted ſomething of a myſtery not eaſily penetrated into.

Miſs Betſy, however, was not of a diſpoſition to think too much, or too deeply, on thoſe things, which the moſt nearly concerned herſelf, much leſs on ſuch as related entirely to other people; and miſs Flora coming home ſoon after, and relating what converſation had paſſed in the viſits ſhe had been making, and the dreſſes the ſeveral ladies had on, and ſuch other trifling matters, diverted the other from thoſe ſerious reflections, which might otherwiſe, perhaps, have laſted ſomewhat longer.

When miſs Flora was undreſſed, they went down together into the parlour, where they found mr. Goodman extremely uneaſy, that lady Mellaſin was not come

home: he had been told in what manner ſhe went out, and it now being grown dark, he was frighted leaſt any ill accident ſhould befall her, as ſhe had no man-ſervant, nor any one with her but her woman, whom, he ſaid, he could not look on as a ſufficient guard for a lady of quality, againſt thoſe inſults, which night, and the libertiniſm of the age, frequently produced.

This tender huſband aſked the young ladies a thouſand queſtions, concerning the poſſibility of gueſſing to whom, and to what part of the town, ſhe was gone, in order that he might go himſelf, or ſend a ſervant, to conduct her ſafely home; but neither of them were able to inform him any thing farther, than what has been already related; that ſhe had been ſent for to a ſick relation, who, as it appeared to them, had been very preſſing to engage her ladyſhip to that charitable office.

Mr. Goodman then began to endeavour to recollect the names and places of abode, of all thoſe he had ever heard her ſay were of her kindred, for ſhe had never ſuffered any of them to come to the houſe, under pretence that ſome of them had not behaved well, and that others being fallen to decay, and poor, might expect favours from her, and that ſhe would ſuffer nobody

body belonging to her to be burthenſome to him.

He was, notwithſtanding, about to ſend his men in ſearch of his beloved lady, though he knew not where to direct them to go, when ſhe and mrs. Prinks came home: he received her with all the tranſports a man of his years could be capable of, but gently chid her for the little care ſhe had taken of herſelf, and looking on her, as mrs. Prinks was pulling off her hood, "Bleſs me, my dear," ſaid he, "what "was your fancy for going out in ſuch "a dreſs?" "My couſin," replied ſhe, "is in very wretched circumſtances, lives "in a little mean lodging, and, beſides, "owes money; if I had gone any thing "like myſelf, the people of the houſe "might have expected great things from "me. I am very compaſſionate, indeed, "to every one under misfortunes, but "will never ſquander mr. Goodman's "money for their relief."

"I know thou art all goodneſs," ſaid the old gentleman, kiſſing her with the utmoſt tenderneſs; "but ſomething," continued he, "methinks, might be ſpar-"ed." "Leave it to me, mr. Goodman," anſwered ſhe, "I know beſt, — they have "not deſerved it from me:" She then told

told a long ſtory, how kind ſhe had been to this couſin, and ſome others of her kindred in her firſt huſband's time, and gave ſome inſtances of the ill uſe they had made of her bounties. All ſhe ſaid had ſo much the appearance of truth, that even miſs Betſy, who was far from having an high opinion of her ſincerity, believed it, and thought no farther of what had paſſed; ſhe had indeed, in a ſhort time, ſufficient buſineſs of her own to take up all her mind.

Mr. Goodman, the very next day, brought home a very agreeable young gentleman to dine with him, who, though he paid an extraordinary reſpect to lady Mellaſin, and treated her daughter with the utmoſt complaiſance, yet in the compliments he made to miſs Betſy, there was ſomething which ſeemed to tell her ſhe had inſpired him with a paſſion more tender than bare reſpect, and more ſincere than common complaiſance.

She had very penetrating eyes this way, and never made a conqueſt without knowing ſhe did ſo; ſhe was not, therefore, wanting in all thoſe little artifices ſhe had but too much made her ſtudy, in order to fix the impreſſion ſhe had given this ſtranger as indeliable as poſſible: this ſhe had a very good opportunity for doing; he

he ſtayed the whole afternoon, drank tea with the ladies, and left them not, 'till a crowd of company coming in, he thought good manners obliged him to retire.

Miſs Betſy was filled with the moſt impatient curioſity to know the name and character of this perſon, whom ſhe had already ſet down in her mind as a new adorer: ſhe aſked miſs Flora when they were going to bed, as if it were a matter of indifference to her, and meerly for the ſake of chat, who that gentleman was who had dined with them, and made ſo long a viſit; but that young lady had never ſeen him before, and was as ignorant of every thing concerning him, as herſelf.

Miſs Betſy, however, loſt no part of her repoſe that night, on this account, as ſhe doubted not but ſhe ſhould very ſoon be informed by himſelf of all ſhe wiſhed to know: ſhe was but juſt out of bed the next morning, when a maid-ſervant came into the chamber, and delivered a letter to her, which ſhe told her was brought by a porter, who waited for an anſwer.

Miſs Betſy's heart fluttered at the mention of a letter, flattering herſelf it came from the perſon, who at preſent engroſſed her thoughts; but on taking it from the maid,

maid, found a woman's hand on the ſuperſcription, and one perfectly known to her, though that inſtant ſhe could not reflect to whom it belonged: ſhe was a good deal ſurpriſed, when on breaking the ſeal ſhe found it came from miſs Forward, with whom, as well as the reſt of the boarding-ſchool ladies, ſhe had ceaſed all correſpondence for many months. The contents were theſe:

To miſs BETSY THOUGHTLESS.

" *Dear miſs* Betſy,

" THOUGH ſince I had the pleaſure
" of ſeeing or hearing from you, ſo
" many accidents, and odd turns of for-
" tune, have happened to me, as might
" very well engroſs my whole attention;
" yet I cannot be ſo far forgetful of our
" former friendſhip, as to be in the ſame
" town with you, without letting you
" know, and deſiring to ſee you. Were
" there a poſſibility of my waiting on you,
" I certainly ſhould have made you the
" firſt viſit; but alas! at preſent there is
" not.—Oh! miſs Betſy, I have ſtrange
" things to tell you; — things fit only to
" be truſted to a perſon whoſe generoſity
" and good-nature I have experienced.
" If therefore you are ſo good to come, I
" muſt intreat you will bring no compa-

" nion

" nion with you, and alſo that you will
" allow me that favour the firſt leiſure
" hour; becauſe I am in ſome hopes of
" returning to L———e in a ſhort time.
" Pleaſe to enquire for the houſe of one
" mrs. Nightſhade, in Chick-lane, near
" Smithfield, where you will find her,
" who, in ſpite of time, abſence, and a
" thouſand perplexing circumſtances, is

" With the moſt tender regard,

" My dear miſs Betſy,

" Your very ſincere,

" Though unfortunate, friend,

" A. FORWARD.

" P. S. Be ſo good to let me know, by a
" line, whether I may flatter myſelf
" with the hopes of ſeeing you, and
" at what time."

Though miſs Betſy, through the hurry of her own affairs, had neglected writing to this young lady for a conſiderable time; yet ſhe was extremely pleaſed at hearing from her: ſhe could not imagine, however, what ſtrange turns of fortune they were ſhe mentioned in her letter, and which ſhe ſuppoſed had brought her to Lon-

London. Equally impatient to ſatisfy her curioſity in this point, as to ſee a perſon with whom ſhe had contracted her firſt friendſhip, ſhe took pen and paper and immediately wrote this anſwer:

To miſs FORWARD.

"*Dear miſs* Forward,

"THE ſatisfaction of hearing you were "ſo near me would be compleat, "were it not allayed by the hints you "give, that ſome accidents, not altoge- "ther pleaſing, had occaſioned it. I long "to hear what has happened to you, "ſince laſt we ſaw each other, and will "not fail to wait on you this afternoon. "I know nothing of the part of the town "you are in, but ſuppoſe a hackney- "coach will be able to find its way. I "will detain your meſſenger no longer, "than to tell you that I am,

"With the moſt perfect amity,

"Dear miſs Forward,

"Your very affectionate friend,

"And humble ſervant,

"E. THOUGHTLESS."

Miſs

Miſs Flora had not been preſent when the maid delivered the letter to miſs Betſy; but coming into the chamber juſt as ſhe had finiſhed, and was ſealing up the anſwer to it: "So," ſaid ſhe, "have I "catched you? Pray what new lover "have you been writing to this morn-"ing?" It was in vain that miſs Betſy told her, ſhe never yet had ſeen the man ſhe thought worthy of a letter from her, on the ſcore of love: the other perſiſted in her aſſeverations; and miſs Betſy to ſilence her railery was obliged to ſhew her ſome part of the letter ſhe had received from miſs Forward.

It being near breakfaſt-time they went down together into the parlour, and as they were drinking their Coffee, "Well, "pretty lady," ſaid mr. Goodman to miſs Betſy, with a ſmile, "how did you like "the gentleman that dined here yeſter-"day." This queſtion ſo much ſurpriſed her, that ſhe could not help bluſhing. "Like him, Sir," replied ſhe, "I did "not take any notice of him.—I re-"member a ſtranger was here, and ſtaid "a good while, and that is all; for I "neither obſerved any thing he ſaid, or "did, or thought on him ſince." "The "agreeable confuſion," cried mr. Goodman,

man, gaily, "you are in at my mentioning him, makes me believe you remarked him more than you are willing to acknowlege, and I am very glad of it.—You do him but juſtice I aſſure you, for he is very much in love with you.

"Lord, ſir," ſaid miſs Betſy, bluſhing ſtill more, "I cannot imagine what makes you talk ſo; I don't ſuppoſe the man thinks of me any more than I do of him. "That may be," rejoined he, laughing outright. Lady Mellaſin then took up the word, and told her huſband, he was very merry that morning. "Aye," ſaid he, "the hurry of ſpirits I have put poor miſs Betſy in, has made me ſo; but I can aſſure you the thing is very ſerious; but," continued he, "you ſhall know the whole of it."

He then proceeded to inform them, that the perſon, he had been ſpeaking of, was the ſon of one who had formerly been a merchant; but who having acquired a large fortune by his induſtry, had for ſeveral years paſt left off buſineſs, and lived moſtly in the country; that the young gentleman had ſeen miſs Betſy at St. Paul's rehearſal, when they were all there to hear the muſic; that the next day after, he had come to him at a coffee-houſe, which

it

it was known he frequented, and after aſking many queſtions concerning miſs Betſy, and hearing ſhe was not engaged, declared he was very much charmed with her, and entreated his permiſſion, as being her guardian, to make his addreſſes to her. Mr. Goodman remembered the affront he had received from alderman Saving on a like occaſion, and was determined not to lay himſelf open to the ſame from mr. Staple, (for ſo he was called,) and plainly told the young lover, that he would encourage nothing of that ſort, without the approbation of his father; that after this he had a meeting with the old gentleman, who being fully ſatisfied by him of miſs Betſy's family, fortune, and character, had no objections to make againſt his ſon's inclinations. "Having this "ſanction," continued mr. Goodman, "and believing it may be a very proper "match for both of you, I brought "him home with me to dinner yeſter-"day, and ſhould be glad to know how "far you think you can approve of the "offer before I give him my conſent to "make it."

"I have already told you, ſir," replied miſs Betſy, "that I took but little notice "of the gentleman; — or, if I had, "ſhould never have aſked myſelf the "queſtion,

" queſtion, whether I could like him or " not; for as to marriage, I do aſſure " you, ſir, it is a thing that has never " yet entered into my head." " Nay, as " to that," returned he, " it is time " enough, indeed. — A good huſband, " however, can never come unſeaſonably. " — I ſhall tell him, he may viſit you, " and leave you to anſwer the addreſſes " according to the dictates of your heart."

Miſs Betſy neither oppoſed, nor gave conſent to what her guardian ſaid, on this ſcore; but her not refuſing ſeemed to him a ſufficient grant: ſo there paſſed nothing more, except ſome little pleaſantries uſual on ſuch ſubjects.

CHAP. XIII.

Contains ſome part of the hiſtory of miſs Forward's adventures, from the time of her leaving the boarding-ſchool, as related by herſelf to miſs Betſy.

MISS Betſy had now her head, though not her heart, full of the two new conqueſts ſhe had made: mr. Trueworth was ſtrongly recommended by her brother, — mr.

— mr. Staple by her guardian; yet all the idea ſhe had of either of them, ſerved only to excite in her the pleaſing imagination how, when they both came to addreſs her, ſhe ſhould play the one againſt the other, and give herſelf a conſtant round of diverſion, by their alternate contentment or diſquiet. As the barometer, ſaid ſhe to herſelf, is governed by the weather, ſo is the man in love governed by the woman he admires: he is a meer machine, — acts nothing of himſelf, — has no will or power of his own, but is lifted up, or depreſſed, juſt as the charmer of his heart is in the humour. I wiſh, continued ſhe, I knew what day theſe poor creatures would come, — though 'tis no matter, — I have got it ſeems poſſeſſion of their hearts, and their eyes will find graces in me, let me appear in what ſhape ſoever.

Theſe contemplations, however enchanting as they were to her vanity, did not render her forgetful of the promiſe ſhe had made miſs Forward, and, as ſoon as dinner was over, ordered a hackney-coach to be called, and went to the place miſs Forward's letter had directed.

It is ſcarce poſſible for any one to be more ſurpriſed than ſhe was, on entering the houſe of mrs. Nightſhade. The father of

of miſs Forward was a gentleman of a large eſtate, and of great conſideration in the county where he lived, and ſhe expected to have ſeen his daughter in lodgings ſuitable to her birth and fortune: inſtead of which, ſhe found herſelf conducted by an old ill-looked mean woman, who gave her to underſtand ſhe was the miſtreſs of the houſe, up two-pair-of-ſtairs, ſo narrow that ſhe was obliged to hold her hoop quite under her arm, in order to gain the ſteep, and almoſt perpendicular aſcent:— ſhe was then ſhewed into a little dirty chamber, where on a wretched bed miſs Forward lay in a moſt melancholly and dejected poſture. "Here is a lady wants "you," ſaid the hag, who uſhered in miſs Betſy. Theſe words, and the opening the door, made miſs Forward ſtart from the bed to receive her viſitor in the beſt manner ſhe could: ſhe ſaluted, ſhe embraced her with all the demonſtrations of joy and affection; but miſs Betſy was ſo confounded at the appearance of every thing about her, that ſhe was almoſt incapable of returning her careſſes.

Miſs Forward eaſily perceived the confuſion her friend was in, and having led her to a chair, and ſeated herſelf near her, "My dear miſs Betſy," ſaid ſhe, "I do "not wonder you are alarmed at find-

"ing

" ing me in a condition ſo different from
" what you might have expected: my let-
" ter indeed gave you a hint of ſome mis-
" fortunes that had befallen me; but I
" forbore letting you know of what na-
" ture they were, becauſe the facts, with-
" out the circumſtances, which would have
" been too long to communicate by writ-
" ing, might have made me appear more
" criminal, than I flatter myſelf you will
" think I really am, when you ſhall be
" told the whole of my unhappy ſtory."

Miſs Betſy then aſſured her, ſhe ſhould take a friendly part in every thing that had happened to her, and that nothing could oblige her more than the confidence ſhe mentioned: on which the other taking her by the hand, and letting fall ſome tears, ſaid, "O miſs Betſy! miſs Betſy,— I have
" ſuffered much, and if you find a great
" deal to blame me for, you will find yet
" much more to pity." Then after having pauſed a little, as if to recollect the paſſages ſhe was about to relate, began in this manner:

'You muſt remember,' ſaid ſhe, 'that
'when you left us to go for London, I
'was ſtrictly watched and confined, on
'account of my innocent correſpondence
'with mr. Sparkiſh; but that young gen-

'tleman being ſent to the univerſity ſoon 'after, I had the ſame liberty as ever, 'and as much as any young lady in the 'ſchool. The tutoreſs, who was with us 'in your time, being in an ill ſtate of 'health, went away, and one mademoi-'ſelle Grenouille, a French-woman, was 'put in her place: the governeſs had 'a high opinion of her, not only on the 'ſcore of the character ſhe had of her, 'but alſo for the gravity of her behaviour. 'But as demure, however, as ſhe affected 'to be before her, ſhe could be as merry 'and facetious as ourſelves, when out of 'her ſight, as you will ſoon perceive by 'what I have to tell you.

'Whenever any of us took an evening's 'walk, this was the perſon to whoſe care 'we were entruſted, the governeſs grow-'ing every day more infirm, and indeed 'unable to attend us.

'It was towards the cloſe of a very hot 'day, that myſelf, and two more, went 'with mademoiſelle Grenouille to take 'a little air in the lane, at the backſide 'of the great road, that leads up to lord '***'s fine ſeat. We were about the 'middle of the lane when we heard the 'ſound of French-horns, double-curtalls, 'and other inſtruments of wind-muſic:

'ma-

'mademoiſelle at this could not reſtrain 'the natural alertneſs of her country, but 'went dancing on, 'till we came very 'near thoſe that played.

'You muſt know, my dear miſs Betſy,' continued ſhe, 'that my lord ***'s park 'wall reaches to the bottom of this lane, 'and has a little gate into it: having, it 'ſeems, ſome company with him, he had 'ordered two tents to be erected in that 'part of the park; the one for himſelf 'and friends, the other for the muſic, 'who ſounded the inſtruments to the 'healths were toaſted: but this we being 'ignorant of, and delighted with the har-'mony, wandered on till we came cloſe 'to the little gate I mentioned, and there 'ſtood ſtill liſtening to it. Some one or 'other of the gentlemen ſaw us, and ſaid 'to the others, 'We have Eve's-drop-"pers;' on which they quitted their ſeats, 'and ran to the gate: on ſeeing them all 'approach, we would have drawn back, 'but they were too quick for us; the gate 'was inſtantly thrown open, and ſix or 'ſeven gentlemen, of whom my lord him-'ſelf was one, ruſhed out upon us. Per-'ceiving we endeavoured to eſcape them, 'they catched hold of us, 'Nay ladies,' 'ſaid one of them, 'you muſt not think

" to avoid paying the piper, after having " heard his muſic.'

' Mademoiſelle, on this, addreſſed her- ' ſelf to my lord ***, with as much for- ' mality as ſhe could aſſume, and told ' him, we were young ladies of diſtinc- ' tion, who were placed at a boarding- ' ſchool juſt by, and at preſent were un- ' der her care, ſo begged no rudeneſs ' might be offered. His lordſhip pro- ' teſted on his honour none ſhould; but ' inſiſted on our coming into the park, and ' drinking one glaſs of whatever wine we ' pleaſed; upon which, ' What ſay you, " ladies?' cried mademoiſelle, ' I believe " we may depend on his lordſhip's pro- " tection.' None of us oppoſed the mo- ' tion, as being as glad to accept it as ' herſelf. In fine, we went in, and were ' conducted to the tent, in the midſt of ' which were placed bottles, glaſſes, jellies, ' ſweetmeats, pickles, and I know not ' what other things to regale and quicken ' the appetite. Servants, who attended, ' cooled the glaſſes out of a ſilver foun- ' tain, on a little pedeſtal, at the one end ' of the tent, and filled every one a glaſs ' with what each of us choſe. One of the ' company perceiving our conductreſs was ' a French-woman, talked to her in her ' own language, and led her a minuette

' round

'round the table; and, in the mean time, 'the others took the opportunity of en-'tertaining us: he that had hold of me, ſo 'plied me with kiſſes and embraces, that 'I ſcarce knew where I was.—Oh! the 'difference between his careſſes and the 'boyiſh inſipid ſalutes of maſter Sparkiſh! 'The others, I ſuppoſe, were ſerved with 'the ſame agreeable robuſtneſs I was; but 'I had not the power of obſerving them, 'any more than, as I afterwards found, 'they had of me.

'In fine, never were poor innocent girls 'ſo preſſed, — ſo kiſſed: — every thing 'but the dernier undoing deed, and that 'there was no opportunity of completing, 'every one of us, our tutoreſs not ex-'cepted, I am certain experienced.

"Heavens!" cried miſs Betſy, inter-rupting her, "how I envied your happi-"neſs a moment ſince, and how I tremble "for you now."

'O miſs Betſy,' replied miſs Forward, 'every thing would have been done in 'that forgetful hour; but as I have al-'ready ſaid, there was not an opportunity. 'My lover notwithſtanding, for ſo I muſt 'call him, would not let me get out of 'his arms, till I had told him my name,

'and by what means he ſhould convey a 'letter to me. I affected to make a 'ſcruple of granting this requeſt, though 'heaven knows I was but too well pleaſed 'at his graſping me ſtill faſter, in order 'to compel me to it. I then gave him 'my name, and told him, that if he 'would needs write, I knew no other 'way by which he might be ſure of my 'receiving his letter, but by ſlipping it 'into my hand as I was coming out of 'church, which he might eaſily do, there 'being always a great concourſe of people 'about the door; on this he gave me a 'ſalute, the warmth of which I never 'ſhall forget, and then ſuffered me to de-'part with my companions, who, if they 'were not quite ſo much engaged as my-'ſelf, had yet enough to make them re-'member this night's ramble.

'The tutoreſs knew well enough how to 'excuſe our ſtaying out ſo much longer 'than uſual, and neither the governeſs, 'nor any one in the family, except our-'ſelves, knew any thing of what had 'paſſed. I cannot ſay but my head ran 'extremely on this adventure. I heartily 'wiſhed my pretty fellow might keep his 'word in writing to me, and was form-'ing a thouſand projects how to keep up 'a correſpondence with him. I don't tell

'you

‘ you I was what they call in love; but
‘ certainly I was very near it, and longed
‘ much more for ſunday than ever I had
‘ done for a new gown: at laſt the wiſhed
‘ for day arrived,—my gentleman was
‘ punctual,—he came cloſe to me in the
‘ church-porch,—I held my hand in a
‘ careleſs manner, with my handkerchief
‘ in it, behind me, and preſently found
‘ ſomething put into it, which I haſtily
‘ conveyed into my pocket, and on com-
‘ ing home, found a little three-corner'd
‘ billet, containing theſe lines:

To the charming miſs FORWARD.

“ *Moſt lovely of your ſex,*

“ I HAVE not ſlept ſince I ſaw you,
“ —ſo deep an impreſſion has your
“ beauty made on my heart, that I find
“ I cannot live without you; nor even
“ die in peace, if you vouchſafe not my
“ laſt breath to iſſue at your feet. In
“ pity then to the ſufferings you occaſion,
“ grant me a ſecond interview, though it
“ be only to kill me with your frowns.
“ I am too much a ſtranger in theſe parts
“ to contrive the means; be, therefore,
“ ſo divinely good to do it for me, elſe
“ expect to ſee me carried by your door
“ a bleeding, breathleſs corps,—the vic-

" tim of your cruelty, inſtead of your " compaſſion, to

" Your moſt grateful adorer,

" And everlaſting ſlave,

" R. WILDLY."

' In a poſtſcript to this,' purſued miſs Forward, ' he told me, that he would be ' in the church-porch in the-afternoon, ' hoping to receive my anſwer by the ' ſame means I had directed him to con- ' vey to me the dictates of his heart.

' I read this letter over and over, as ' you may eaſily gueſs, by my remember- ' ing the contents of it ſo perfectly; but ' it is impoſſible for me to expreſs the ' perplexity I was in how to reply to it. ' I do not mean how to excuſe myſelf from ' granting the interview he ſo paſſionately ' requeſted; for that, perhaps, I wiſhed ' for with as much impatience as he could ' do, but I was diſtracted at not being ' able to contrive any practicable method ' for our meeting.

' O miſs Betſy, how did I long for you, ' or ſuch a friend as you, to aſſiſt me in ' this dilemma! but there was no one ' perſon in the whole houſe I dared truſt

' with

'with ſuch a ſecret: — I could not eat a 'bit of dinner, nor ſcarce ſpeak a word 'to any body; ſo much were my thoughts 'taken up with what I ſhould do. I was 'reſolved to ſee him, and hear what he 'had to ſay, whatever ſhould be the con-'ſequence: at laſt I hit upon a way, dan-'gerous indeed in every reſpect, and 'ſhameful in a girl of my condition; 'yet as there were no other, the frenzy I 'was poſſeſſed of, compelled me to have 'recourſe to it.

'You muſt remember, my dear miſs 'Betſy,' continued ſhe, with a deep ſigh, 'the little door at the farther end of the 'garden, where by your kind contrivance 'young Sparkiſh was introduced: it was 'at this door I determined to meet mr. 'Wildly. This you may be ſure could 'not be done by day, without a diſco-'very, ſome one or other being continu-'ally running into the garden. I there-'fore fixed the rendezvous at night, at 'an hour when I was poſitive all the fa-'mily would be in bed, and ordered it in 'this manner:

'Chance aided my ill genius in my 'undoing: I lay at that time alone; — 'miſs Bab, who uſed to be my bedfellow, 'was gone home for a fortnight, on ac-

'count of a great wedding in their family, 'and I thought I could eaſily ſlip down 'ſtairs when every body was aſleep, and 'go through the kitchen, from which you 'know there is a paſſage into the garden. 'I took no care for any thing, but to pre-'vent the diſappointment of my deſign; 'for I apprehended nothing of ill from a 'man who adored me, and of whoſe will 'and actions I fooliſhly imagined I had 'the ſole command.

'The ſettling this matter in my mind 'engroſſed all my thoughts, till the bell 'began to ring for divine ſervice, and I 'had only time to write theſe lines in an-'ſwer to his billet:

To mr. WILDLY.

"*Sir*,

"I HAVE been always told it was "highly criminal in a young maid, "like me, to liſten to the addreſſes of "any man without receiving the per-"miſſion of her parents for ſo doing; "yet, I hope, I ſhall ſtand excuſed both "to them and you, if I confeſs I am wil-"ling to be the firſt to hear what ſo nearly "concerns myſelf. I have but one way "of ſpeaking to you, and if your love "be as ſincere and fervent as you pretend,

"you

" you will not think it too much to wait
" between the hours of eleven and twelve
" this night, at a green door, in the wall
" which encompaſſes our garden, at the
" further end of the lane, leading to that
" part of lord ***'s park, where we firſt
" ſaw each other; you will find me, if
" no croſs accident intervenes, at the time
" and place I mention; but impute this
" condeſcenſion to no other motive than
" that compaſſion you implore. I flatter
" myſelf your intentions are honourable,
" and in that belief am,

" Sir,

" Your humble ſervant,

" A. FORWARD."

Miſs Betſy, during the repetition of this letter, and ſome time before, ſhook her head, and ſhewed great tokens of ſurprize and diſapprobation, but offering no interruption, the other went on in her diſcourſe in this manner:

' I proteſt to you, my dear miſs Betſy,' ſaid ſhe, ' that I had nothing in view by ' this letter, and the aſſignation it con- ' tained, than to ſecure him to me as a ' lover. I never had reaſon to repent of ' the private correſpondence I carried on

'with mr. Sparkiſh, nor knew it was in 'the nature of man to take advantage of 'a maid's ſimplicity; but I will not pro-'tract the narrative I promiſed by any 'needleſs particulars. Every thing hap-'pened but too fortunately, alas! accor-'ding to my wiſh: I found mr. Wildly 'in the church-porch, gave him the fatal 'billet, unperceived by any one: night 'came on, — all the family were gone to 'their repoſe, — and I unſeen, unheard, 'and unſuſpected, quitted my chamber, 'and taking the route I told you of, 'opened the garden door, where it ſeems 'the perſon I expected had waited above 'half an hour.

'His firſt ſalutations were the moſt 'humble, and withal the moſt endearing, 'that could be. 'My angel,' ſaid he, "how heavenly good you are! permit "me thus to thank you.' With theſe 'words he threw himſelf on his knees, 'and taking one of my hands, kiſſed it 'with the extremeſt tenderneſs. But, oh! 'let no young woman depend on the firſt 'profeſſions of her lover; nor in her own 'power of keeping him at a proper diſ-'tance.

Here a ſudden guſh of tears prevented her, for ſome minutes, from proſecuting her

her diſcourſe, and miſs Betſy found herſelf obliged to treat her with more tenderneſs, than in her own mind ſhe thought the nature of her caſe deſerved.

CHAP. XIV.

Concludes miſs Forward's narrative, and relates ſome further particulars of miſs Betſy's behaviour, on hearing a detail ſhe ſo little expected.

HOW ſweet are the conſolations of a ſincere friend! — how greatly do they alleviate the ſevereſt of misfortunes! — miſs Forward ſoon dried up her tears, on a ſoft commiſeration ſhe ſaw they excited in miſs Betſy; and ſtifling, as well as ſhe could, the riſing ſighs with which her boſom heaved, at the remembrance of what ſhe was going to relate, reſumed her mournful ſtory in theſe terms:

'You may very well ſuppoſe,' ſaid ſhe, 'that the garden-door was not a proper 'place to entertain my lover in: — good-'manners forbad me to uſe him in ſo 'coarſe a manner: — beſides, late as it 'was, ſome paſſenger might happen to 'come that way; I therefore led him into 'the

'the arbour, at the end of the terraſs, 'where we ſat down together, on that 'broad bench under the arch, where you 'ſo often uſed to loll, and call it your 'throne of ſtate. Never was there a finer 'night: — the moon, and her attendant 'ſtars, ſhone with uncommon brightneſs, 'the air was all ſerene, the boiſterous winds 'were all locked in their caverns, and only 'gentle zephirs, with their fanning wings, 'wafted a thouſand odours from the neigh-'bouring plants, perfuming all around. — 'Twas an enchanting ſcene: nature her-'ſelf ſeemed to conſpire my ruin, and con-'tributed all in her power to lull my 'mind into a ſoft forgetfulneſs of what 'I owed myſelf, — my fame, — my for-'tune, — and my family.

'I was beginning to tell him, how ſen-'ſible I was, that to admit him in this 'manner, was againſt all the rules of de-'cency and decorum, and that I hoped 'he would not abuſe the good opinion I 'had of him, nor entertain the worſe of 'me for my ſo readily complying with 'his requeſt, and ſuch like ſtuff: to which 'he gave little ear, and only anſwered 'me with proteſtations of the moſt violent 'paſſion that ever was; — ſwore that I 'had more charms than my whole ſex be-'ſides could boaſt of; — that I was an

'angel!

'angel! — a goddeſs! — that I was na-
'ture's whole perfection in one piece:
'then looking on me with the moſt ten-
'der languiſhments, he repeated theſe
'lines in a kind of extaſy:

'In forming thee, heav'n took unuſual
'care;
'Like its own beauty it deſigned thee
'fair,
'And copied from the beſt-lov'd angel
'there.

'The anſwers I made to theſe romantic
'encomiums were ſilly enough, I believe,
'and ſuch as encouraged him to think I
'was too well pleaſed to be much offended
'at any thing he did. He kiſſed, — he
'claſped me to his boſom, ſtill ſilencing
'my rebukes, by telling me how hand-
'ſome I was, and how much he loved
'me; and that as opportunities of ſpeak-
'ing to me were ſo difficult to be ob-
'tained, I muſt not think him too pre-
'ſuming if he made the moſt of this.

'What could I do? — how reſiſt his
'preſſures? The maid having put me to
'bed that night, as uſual, I had no time
'to dreſs myſelf again after I got up, ſo
'was in the moſt looſe diſhabille that can
'be imagined. His ſtrength was far ſu-
'perior to mine; — there was no crea-
'ture

'ture to come to my aſſiſtance; — the 'time, — the place, — all joined to aid 'his wiſhes; — and, with the bittereſt re-'gret and ſhame I now confeſs it, my 'own fond heart too much conſented.

'In a word, my dear miſs Betſy, from 'one liberty he proceeded to another, till 'at laſt there was nothing left for him to 'aſk, or me to grant.'

Theſe laſt words were accompanied with a ſecond flood of tears, which ſtreamed in ſuch abundance down her cheeks, that miſs Betſy was extremely moved: her good-nature made her pity the diſtreſs, tho' her virtue and underſtanding taught her to deteſt and deſpiſe the ill conduct which occaſioned it: ſhe wept, and ſighed, in concert with her afflicted friend, and omitted nothing that ſhe thought might contribute to aſſwage her ſorrows.

Miſs Forward was charmed with this generoſity in miſs Betſy, and compoſed herſelf as much as poſſible, to make thoſe acknowlegments it merited from her; and then proceeded to gratify her curioſity with that part of her adventures which yet remained untold.

'When-

'Whenever I recollect,' reſumed ſhe, 'how ſtrangely, — how ſuddenly, — how 'almoſt unſollicited, I yielded up my ho-'nour, ſome lines, which I remember to 'have read ſomewhere, come into my 'mind, and ſeem, methinks, perfectly 'adapted to my circumſtances. — They 'are theſe,

'Pleas'd with deſtruction, proud to be undone,
'With open arms I to my ruin run,
'And ſought the miſchiefs I was bid to ſhun:
'Tempted that ſhame a virgin ought to dread,
'And had not the excuſe of being be-tray'd.

'Alas! I ſee my folly now, — my 'madneſs, — but was blind to it too long. 'I upbraided not my undoer: — I re-'monſtrated not to him any of the ill 'conſequences might poſſibly attend this 'tranſaction; nor mentioned one word 'concerning how incumbent it was on 'him, to repair the injury he had done 'me by marriage: — ſure never was there 'ſo infatuated a wretch! Morning be-'gan to break in upon us, and the pangs 'of being obliged to part, and the means

'of

'of meeting again, now took up all my 'thoughts. Letting him in at midnight 'was very dangerous, as old nurſe Win-'ter, who you know is very vapouriſh, 'often fancies ſhe hears noiſes in the houſe, 'and riſes to ſee if all the doors and 'windows are faſt: beſides mr. Wildly 'told me, it was highly inconvenient for 'him, being obliged to make a friend of 'my lord ***'s porter, to ſit up for 'him.

'I was almoſt at my wit's end, 'till he 'recovered me by ſaying, he believed 'there might be a more eaſy way for our 'intercourſe, than this nocturnal rendez-'vous. 'Oh! what is that?' cried I, 'earneſtly. 'The French-woman,' re-'plied he, 'that lives here, is good-na-"tured, and of a very amorous com-"plexion; at leaſt ſir John Shuffle, who "toyed with her in my lord's park, tells "me ſhe is ſo; but,' continued he, 'I "dare take his word; he knows your ſex "perfectly, and, I dare anſwer, if you "will get her to go abroad with you, "the conſequence will be agreeable to us "all.'

"What,' ſaid I, 'would you have me "make her my confidante?' 'Not alto-"gether ſo,' ſaid he; 'at leaſt not till

"you

" you are upon even terms with her; I " mean, till you have ſecret for ſecret.'

" How can that be?" demanded I. " leave that to me,' ſaid he, ' do you on- " ly get her out to-morrow a walking; " let me know what time you think you " can beſt do it, and ſir John and I will " meet you as if by chance.' I told him, ' I would undertake to do it if the wea- ' ther were fair, and that they might ' meet us going towards the town, ' but it muſt be paſt five, after ſhe had ' given her French leſſon to the ladies. ' This being agreed upon, we parted, ' though not without the extremeſt reluc- ' tance; at leaſt, I am ſure on my ſide it ' was ſincerely ſo. I then went back with ' the ſame precaution I had gone out, ' locked all the doors ſoftly, and got into ' my chamber before any of the family ' were ſtirring.

' I was more than ordinarily civil to ' mademoiſelle all the next day: I ſaid ' every thing I could think on to flatter ' her, and having got an opportunity of ' ſpeaking to her alone, ' Dear mademoi- ' ſelle,' ſaid I, in a wheedling tone, ' I " have a great favour to beg of you.' " What is that, miſs?' replied ſhe, ' any " thing in my power you may command.'

' I

'I then told her, I had got a whim in 'my head for a new tippet, and that I 'wanted her fancy in the choice of the 'colours. 'With all my heart,' ſaid ſhe, "and when we go out a walking this "evening, we can call at the milliner's, "and buy the ribbonds.' 'That will not "do,' cried I, 'I would not have any "of the ladies know any thing of the "matter, 'till I have made it and got it "on; ſo no-body muſt go with us.' "Well, well,' anſwered ſhe, 'it ſhall be "ſo; but I muſt tell the governeſs. — "I know ſhe will not be againſt humour-"ing you in ſuch a little fancy, and "will ſend the other tutoreſs, or nurſe "Winter, to wait upon the other ladies.' 'I told her ſhe was very good, but en-'joined her to beg the governeſs to keep 'it a ſecret; for my tippet would be 'mighty pretty, and I wanted to ſurpriſe 'them with the ſight of it.'

'The governeſs, however, was ſo kind 'as to let us go ſomewhat before the time 'we expected, in order to prevent any 'one from offering to accompany us; 'but early as it was, the two gentlemen 'were on the road. They accoſted us 'with a great deal of complaiſance: "What! my Diana of the forreſt!' ſaid 'ſir John, to mademoiſelle, 'am I ſo

"fortunate

" fortunate to ſee you once again?" What
' reply ſhe made I do not know, being
' ſpeaking to Wildly at the ſame time;
' but he alſo, by my inſtigations, made
' his chief court to mademoiſelle, and both
' of them joined to intreat ſhe would per-
' mit them to lead her to ſome houſe of
' entertainment: her refuſals were very
' faint, and perceiving, by my looks, that
' I was not very averſe, ' What ſhall we
' do, miſs?' ſaid ſhe to me, ' there is no
' getting rid of theſe men. Shall we ven-
" ture to go with them? — 'Tis but a fro-
" lic.' ' I am under your direction, ma-
" damoiſelle; but I ſee no harm in it, as
" to be ſure,' replied I, ' they are gentle-
" men of honour.'

' In fine, we went into the firſt houſe
' that had the proſpect of affording us an
' agreeable reception. It is not to be doubt-
' ed but we were treated with the beſt the
' place we were in could ſupply: ſir John
' declared the moſt flaming paſſion for ma-
' demoiſelle, and engroſſed her ſo much
' to himſelf, that Wildly had the liberty
' of addreſſing me, without letting her
' ſee his choice gave me the preference.

' Sir John after uſing mademoiſelle
' with ſome freedoms, which I could per-
' ceive ſhe did not greatly reſent, told
' her,

'her, there was an exceeding fine picture 'in the next room, and aſked her to go 'and look upon it. 'Oh! yes,' replied 'ſhe, 'I am extravagantly fond of paint-"ing. Are not you, miſs?' continued ſhe 'to me, with a careleſs air. 'No,' ſaid 'I, 'I had rather ſtay here, and look "out of the window; but I would not "hinder this gentleman,' meaning mr. 'Wildly: who replied, 'I have ſeen it "already, ſo will ſtay and keep you com-"pany.'

'I believe, indeed, we might have 'ſpared ourſelves the trouble of theſe laſt 'ſpeeches; for our companions ſeemed as 'little to expect as to deſire we ſhould 'follow them, but ran laughing, jump-'ing, and ſkipping out of the room, 'utterly regardleſs of thoſe they left be-'hind.

'Thus you ſee, my dear miſs Betſy, 'continued ſhe, Wildly had, a ſecond 'time, the opportunity of triumphing 'over the weakneſs of your unhappy 'friend. Oh! had it been the laſt, per-'haps I had not been the wretch I am; 'but, alas! my folly ceaſed not here: I 'loved, — and every interview made him 'ſtill dearer to me.

'On

'On mademoiſelle's return, we began 'to talk of going home: 'Bleſs me, 'cried I, 'tis now too late to go into "town. What excuſe ſhall we make to "the governeſs, for not having bought "the ribbonds?' 'I have already con-"trived that,' replied ſhe, 'I will tell "her, that the woman had none but ugly "old faſhioned things, and expects a freſh "parcel from London in two or three "days.' 'O that is rare,' cried I, 'that "will be a charming pretence for our "coming out again.' 'And a charming "opportunity for our meeting you again,' 'ſaid ſir John Shuffle. 'If you have any "inclination to lay hold of it,' rejoined 'mademoiſelle. 'And you have courage "to venture,' cried he. 'You ſee we "are no cowards,' anſwered ſhe briſkly. "Well, then, name your day,' ſaid 'Wildly, 'if ſir John accepts the chal-"lenge, I will be his ſecond; but I am "afraid it cannot be 'till after Thurſday, "becauſe my lord talks of going to ***, "and we cannot be back in leſs than "three days.'

'Friday therefore was the day agreed 'upon, and we all four were punctual to 'the appointment. I ſhall not trouble 'you with the particulars of our conver-

'ſation

'ſation in this or any other of the meet-
'ings we had together, only tell you, that
'by the contrivance of one or other of
'us, we found means of coming together
'once or twice every week, during the
'whole time theſe gentlemen ſtayed in
'the country, which was upwards of two
'months.

'On taking leave, I preſſed Wildly to
'write to me under cover to mademoiſelle
'Grenouille, which he promiſed to do, and
'I was ſilly enough to expect. Many
'poſts arriving without bringing any
'letter, I was ſadly diſappointed, and
'could not forbear expreſſing my concern
'to mademoiſelle, who only laughed at
'me, and told me, I as yet knew no-
'thing of the world, nor the temper of
'mankind; — that a tranſient acquain-
'tance, ſuch as ours had been with theſe
'gentlemen, ought to be forgot as ſoon
'as over; — that there was no great pro-
'bability we ſhould ever ſee one another
'again, and it would be only a folly to
'keep up a correſpondence by letters; —
'and added, that by this time they were,
'doubtleſs, entered into other engage-
'ments; and ſo might we too, ſaid ſhe,
'if the place and faſhion we live in did
'not prevent us.

'I

'I found by this, and ſome other 'ſpeeches of the like nature, that it was 'the ſex, not the perſon, ſhe regarded. 'I could not, however, be of her way 'of thinking. I really loved mr. Wildly, 'and would have given the world, had I 'been miſtreſs of it, to have ſeen him 'again; but, as ſhe ſaid, indeed, there 'was no probability for my doing ſo; and 'therefore I attempted, through her per-'ſuaſions, to make a virtue of neceſſity, 'and forget both him and all had paſs'd 'between us. I ſhould in the end, per-'haps, have accompliſhed this point; but 'oh! I had a remembrancer within, 'which I did not preſently know of. In 'fine, I had but too much reaſon to be-'lieve I was pregnant.—A thing, which 'though a natural conſequence of the folly 'I had been guilty of, never once entered 'into my head.

'Madamoiſelle Grenouille ſeemed now 'terribly alarmed, on my communicating 'to her my ſuſpicions on this ſcore: ſhe 'cried, 'twas very unlucky! — then 'pauſed, and aſked what I would do, if 'it ſhould really be as I feared? I re-'plied, that I knew not what courſe to 'take, for if my father ſhould know it 'I was utterly undone: I added, that he

' was a very auſtere man; and, beſides, ' I had a mother-in-law, who would not ' fail to ſay every thing ſhe could to in- ' cenſe him againſt me.

" I ſee no recourſe you have then,' ' ſaid ſhe, ' but by taking phyſic to cauſe " an abortion. You muſt pretend you " are a little diſordered, and ſend for an " apothecary. The ſooner the better, for " if it ſhould become viſible, all would " infallibly be known, and we ſhould both " be ruined.'

' I was not ſo weak as not to ſee, that ' if any diſcovery were made, her ſhare ' in the intrigue muſt come out, and ſhe ' would be directly turned out of doors; ' and that whatever concern ſhe pretended ' for me, it was chiefly on her own ac- ' count: however, as I ſaw no other re- ' medy, was reſolved to take her advice.

' Thus by having been guilty of one ' crime I was enſnared to commit another, ' of a yet fouler kind: one was the error ' of nature, this an offence againſt nature. ' The black deſign, however, ſucceeded ' not; I took potion after potion, yet ſtill ' retained the token of my ſhame, which ' at length became too perſpicuous for ' me

'me to hope it would not be taken no-
'tice of by all who ſaw me.

'I was almoſt diſtracted, and madamoi-
'ſelle Grenouille little leſs ſo: I was one
'day alone in my chamber, pondering on
'my wretched ſtate, and venting ſome
'part of the anguiſh of my mind in tears,
'when ſhe came in: 'What avails all
"this whimpering, ſaid ſhe, 'you but
"haſten what you would wiſh to avoid.
"The governeſs already perceives you
"are ſtrangely altered; ſhe thinks you
"are either in a bad ſtate of health, or
"ſome way diſordered in your mind, and
"talks of writing to your father to ſend
"for you home.'

"O heavens!' cried I, — 'Home did
"you ſay? — No; I will never go home.
"The grave is not ſo hateful to me, nor
"death ſo terrible as my father's preſence.'
"I pity you from my ſoul,' ſaid ſhe,
"but what can you do? There will be
"no ſtaying for you here, after your con-
"dition is once known, and it cannot be
"concealed much longer.' Theſe words,
'the truth of which I was very well con-
'vinced of, drove me into the laſt diſ-
'pair: I raved, — I tore my hair, —
'I ſwore to poiſon, drown, or ſtab my-
'ſelf, rather than live to have my ſhame

'exposed to the severity of my father, 'and reproaches of my kindred.

"Come, come,' resumed she, 'there "is no need of such desperate remedies, "you had better go to London, and "have recourse to Wildly; who knows, "as you are a gentleman's daughter, and "will have a fortune, but you may per-"swade him to marry you? if not, you "can oblige him to take care of you "in your lying-in, and to keep the child: "and when you are once got rid of your "burthen, some excuse or other may be "found for your elopement.'

"But how shall I get to London?" re-'sumed I, 'how find out my undoer in "a place I know nothing of, nor ever "have been at? Of whom shall I en-"quire? I am ignorant of what family "he is, or even where he lives.' 'As to "that,' replied she, 'I will undertake to "inform myself of every thing necessary "for you to know, and if you resolve to "go I will set about it directly.' I then 'told her, I would do any thing, rather 'than be exposed; on which she bid 'me assume as chearful a countenance as 'I could, and depend on her bringing 'me some intelligence of Wildly before I 'slept.

'The

'The method ſhe took to make good 'her promiſe, was, it ſeems, to ſend a 'perſon whom ſhe could confide in to the 'ſeat of lord ***, to enquire among the 'ſervants where mr. Wildly, who had 'lately been a gueſt there, might be found. 'She told me, that the anſwer they gave 'the man was, that they knew not where 'he lodged, but that he might be heard 'of at any of the coffee-houſes about St. 'James's. As I was altogether a ſtranger 'in London, this information gave me 'but little ſatisfaction; but madamoiſelle 'Grenouille, whoſe intereſt it was to hurry 'me away, aſſured me that ſhe knew that 'part of the town perfectly well, having 'lived there ſeveral months on her firſt 'arrival in England; — that there were 'ſeveral great coffee-houſes there, fre-'quented by all the gentlemen of faſhion, 'and that nothing would be more eaſy 'than to find mr. Wildly at one or other 'of them. My heart, however, ſhuddered 'at the thoughts of this enterprize, yet 'her perſwaſions, joined to the terrors I 'was in of being expoſed, and the cer-'tainty that a diſcovery of my condition 'was inevitable, made me reſolve to un-'dertake it.

'Nothing now remained but the means 'how I ſhould get away, ſo as to avoid 'the purſuit might, doubtleſs, be made 'after me; which after ſome conſultation 'was thus contrived, and executed.

'A flying coach ſets out from H—— 'every Monday at two o'clock in the 'morning; madamoiſelle Grenouille en-'gaged the ſame man, who had enquired 'at lord ***'s for mr. Wildly, to ſecure 'a place for me in it. The Sunday be-'fore I was to go I pretended indiſpoſi-'tion to avoid going to church: I paſſed 'that time in packing up the beſt of my 'things in a large bundle; for I had no 'opportunity of taking a box or trunk 'with me. My greateſt difficulty was 'how to get out of bed from miſs Bab, 'who ſtill lay with me. I thought, how-'ever, that if ſhe happened to awake 'while I was riſing, I would tell her I 'was not very well, and was only going 'into the next room, to open the window 'for a little air; but I ſtood in no need 'of this precaution, ſhe was in a ſound 'ſleep, and I left my bed, put on the 'cloaths I was to travel in, took up my 'bundle, and ſtole out of the room, with-'out her perceiving any thing of the mat-'ter. I went out by the ſame way by

'which

'which I had fulfilled my firſt fatal ap-
'pointment with mr. Wildly; at a little
'diſtance from the garden-door, I found
'the friend of madamoiſelle Grenouille,
'who waited for me with a horſe and pil-
'lion; he took my bundle before, and me
'behind him, and then we made the beſt
'of our way towards H——, where we
'arrived time enough for the coach. I
'alighted at the door of the inn, and he
'rode off directly to avoid being ſeen by
'any body, who might deſcribe him, in
'caſe an enquiry ſhould be made.

'I will not trouble you with the parti-
'culars of my journey, nor how I was
'amazed on entering this great metro-
'polis; I ſhall only tell you, that it
'being dark when we came in, I lay that
'night at the inn, and the next morning,
'following the directions madamoiſelle
'Grenouille had given me, took a hack-
'ney coach, and ordered the man to drive
'into any of the ſtreets about St. James's,
'and ſtop at the firſt houſe where he
'ſhould ſee a bill upon the door for ready
'furniſhed lodgings. It happened to be
'in Rider-ſtreet; the woman at firſt ſeem-
'ed a little ſcruplous of taking me, as I
'was a ſtranger, and had no recommen-
'dation; but, on my telling her I would

'pay her a fortnight beforehand, we agreed 'at the rate of twelve ſhillings a week.

'The firſt thing I did was to ſend a 'porter to the coffee-houſes, where he 'eaſily heard of him, but brought me 'the vexatious intelligence that he was 'gone to Tunbridge, and it was not 'known when he would return. This 'was a very great misfortune to me, and 'the more ſo as I had very little money: 'I thought it beſt, however, to follow 'him thither, which I did the ſame 'week.

'But, oh! my dear miſs Betſy, how 'unlucky every thing happened? he had 'left that place the very morning before 'I arrived, and was gone for London. 'I had nothing now to do but return; 'but was ſo diſordered with the fatigues 'I had undergone, that I was obliged to 'ſtay four days to compoſe myſelf. 'When I came back I ſent immediately 'to the coffee-houſe; but how ſhall I ex-'preſs the diſtraction I was in, when I 'was told he had lain but one night in 'town, and was gone to Bath.

'This ſecond diſappointment was ter-'rible indeed: I had but half-a-crown 'remaining of the little ſtock I brought

'from

'from the boarding-ſchool, and had no 'way to procure a ſupply, but by ſelling 'my watch; which I did to a gold-ſmith 'in the neighbourhood, for what he 'was pleaſed to give me, and then ſet 'out for Bath by the firſt coach.

'Here I had the good fortune to meet 'him; he was ſtrangely ſurpriſed at the 'ſight of me in that place, but much 'more ſo when I told him, what had 'brought me there: he ſeemed extremely 'concerned at the accident. But when I 'mentioned marriage, he plainly told 'me, I muſt not think of ſuch a thing: 'that he was not in circumſtances to ſup-'port a family; — that having loſt the 'ſmall fortune, left him by his friends, 'at play, he was obliged to have recourſe, 'for his preſent ſubſiſtence, to the very 'means by which he had been undone: 'In ſhort, that he was a gameſter. The 'name ſtartled me: treated, as I had al-'ways heard it, with the utmoſt contempt, 'I could not reconcile how ſuch a one 'came to be the gueſt and companion of 'a lord, though I have ſince heard, that 'men of that profeſſion frequently receive 'thoſe favours from the nobility, which 'are denied to perſons of more unblemiſh-'ed character.

'Wildly, however, it is certain, has 'ſome notions of honour and good-na-'ture; he aſſured me he would do all in 'his power to protect me; but added, 'that he had been very unfortunate of 'late, and that I muſt wait for a lucky 'chance, before he could afford me any 'ſupply.

'I ſtayed at Bath all the time he was 'there: he viſited me every day, but I 'lived on my own money, 'till we came 'to town, when my time being very near, 'he brought me to the place you find 'me in, having, it ſeems, agreed with 'the woman of the houſe for a cer-'tain ſum of money to ſupport me during 'my lying-in, and keep the child as long 'as it ſhould live. The miſeries I have 'ſuſtained during my abode with this old 'hag, would be too tedious to repeat. 'The only joy I have is, that the wretched 'infant died in three days after its birth, 'ſo has eſcaped the woes, which children 'thus expoſed are doomed to bear. Wildly 'has taken his laſt leave of me, and I 'have wrote to an aunt, entreating her to 'endeavour to obtain my father's forgive-'neſs. I pretended to her, that I left 'L———e for no other reaſon than 'becauſe I had an ardent deſire to ſee

'London;

'London; and, as I think, no-body can 'reveal to him the true cauſe, have ſome 'hopes of not being utterly abandoned by 'him.'

Here this unfortunate creature finiſhed her long narrative, and miſs Betſy ſaw her in too much affliction, to expreſs any thing that might encreaſe it: ſhe only thanked her for repoſing a confidence in her, "Which," ſaid ſhe, "may be of "great ſervice to me ſome time or "other."

Before they parted miſs Forward ſaid, ſhe had gone in debt to mrs. Nightſhade, for ſome few things ſhe wanted, over and above what is generally allowed in ſuch caſes, and had been affronted by her for not being able to diſcharge it, therefore entreated miſs Betſy to lend her twenty ſhillings; on which the generous, and ſweet tempered young lady immediately drew her purſe, and after giving her the ſum ſhe demanded, put two guineas more into her hand: "Be pleaſed to accept "this" ſaid ſhe, "you may poſſibly want "ſomething after having paid your debt." The other thanked her, and told her, ſhe doubted not but her aunt would ſend her ſomething, and ſhe would then repay it. "I ſhall give myſelf no pain about that,"

ſaid miſs Betſy, and then took her leave, deſiring ſhe would let her know by a letter what ſucceſs ſhe had with her friends. Miſs Forward told her, ſhe might depend not only on hearing from her, but ſeeing her again, as ſoon as ſhe had any thing to acquaint her with.

CHAP. XV.

Brings many things on the carpet, highly pleaſing to miſs Betſy, in their beginning, and no leſs perplexing to her in their conſequences.

THE account of thoſe many and dreadful misfortunes, which the ill conduct of miſs Forward had drawn upon her, made miſs Betſy extremely penſive. 'Tis 'ſtrange,' ſaid ſhe to herſelf, 'that a wo-'man cannot indulge herſelf in the liberty 'of converſing freely with a man, with-'out being perſwaded by him to do every 'thing he would have her.' She thought, however, that ſome excuſe might be made for miſs Forward, on the ſcore of her being ſo ſtrictly debarred from all acquaintance with the other ſex. 'People,' cried ſhe, 'have naturally an inclination 'to do what they are moſt forbid. The 'poor

'poor girl had a curioſity to hear herſelf 'addreſſed, and having no opportunity 'of gratifying that paſſion, but by ad-'mitting her lover at ſo odd a time and 'place, was indeed too much in his 'power to have withſtood her ruin, even 'if ſhe had been miſtreſs of more courage 'and reſolution than ſhe was.'

On meditating on the follies which women are ſometimes prevailed upon to be guilty of, the diſcovery ſhe had made of miſs Flora's intrigue with Gayland came freſh into her mind. 'What,' ſaid ſhe, 'could induce her to ſacrifice her honour? 'Declarations of love were not new to 'her. She heard every day the flatteries 'with which our ſex are treated by the 'men, and needed not to have purchaſed 'the aſſiduities of any one of them at ſo 'dear a rate. Good God! are innocence 'and the pride of conſcious virtue, things 'of ſo little eſtimation, as to be thrown 'away for the trifling pleaſure of hearing 'a few tender proteſtations? Perhaps all 'falſe, and uttered by one whoſe heart 'deſpiſes the eaſy fondneſs he has tri-'umphed over, and ridicules the very 'grant of what he has ſo earneſtly ſol-'licited!

It is certain, this young lady had the higheſt notions of honour and virtue, and whenever ſhe gave herſelf time to reflect, looked on every thing that had a tendency to make an encroachment on them with the moſt extreme deteſtation; yet had ſhe good-nature enough to pity thoſe faults in others, ſhe thought it impoſſible for her to be once guilty of herſelf.

But amidſt ſentiments as noble, and as generous, as ever heart was poſſeſſed of, vanity, that foible of her ſoul, crept in, and would have its ſhare. She had never been thoroughly attacked in a diſhonourable way, but by Gayland, and the gentleman-commoner at Oxford; both which ſhe rebuffed with a becoming diſdain. In this ſhe ſecretly exulted, and had that dependance on her power of repelling all the efforts, come they in what ſhape ſoever, that ſhould be made againſt her virtue, that ſhe thought it beneath her to behave ſo as not to be in danger of incurring them.

How great a pity it is, that a mind endued with ſo many excellent qualities, and which had ſuch exalted ideas of what is truly valuable in woman kind, ſhould be tainted with a frailty of ſo fatal a nature,

ture, as to expoſe her to temptations, which if ſhe were not utterly undone, it muſt be owing rather to the interpoſition of her guardian angel, than to the ſtrength of human reaſon: but of that hereafter; at preſent there were none had any baſe deſigns upon her; we muſt ſhew what ſucceſs thoſe gentlemen met with, who addreſſed her with the moſt pure and honourable intentions: of this number we ſhall ſpeak firſt of mr. Trueworth and mr. Staple; the one, as has been already ſaid, ſtrenuouſly recommended by her brother, the other by mr. Goodman.

Mr. Staple had the good fortune (if it may be called ſo) to be the firſt of theſe two who had the opportunity of declaring his paſſion: the journey of the other to London having been retarded two days longer than he intended.

This gentleman having mr. Goodman's leave, made a ſecond viſit at his houſe. Lady Mellaſin and miſs Flora knowing on what buſineſs he was come, made an excuſe for leaving him and miſs Betſy together. He made his addreſſes to her, in the forms which lovers uſually obſerve on the firſt declaration; and ſhe replied to what he ſaid, in a manner not to encourage

courage him too much, nor yet to take from him all hope.

While they were diſcourſing a footman came in, and told her, a gentleman from Oxford deſired to ſpeak with her, having ſome commands from her brother to deliver to her. Mr. Staple ſuppoſing they had buſineſs took his leave, and mr. Trueworth, for it was he indeed, was introduced.

" Madam," ſaid he, ſaluting her with the utmoſt reſpect, " I have many obli-
" gations to mr. Thoughtleſs; but none
" which demands ſo large a portion of
" my gratitude, as the honour he has
" conferred upon me in preſenting you
" with this letter." To which ſhe replied, that her brother muſt certainly have a great confidence in his goodneſs, to give him this trouble; with theſe words ſhe took the letter out of his hand, and having obliged him to ſeat himſelf; " You
" will pardon ſir," ſaid ſhe, " the rude-
" neſs, which my impatience to receive
" the commands of ſo near and dear a
" relation makes me guilty of." He made no other anſwer to theſe words than a low bow, and ſhe withdrew to a window, and found the contents of her brother's letter were theſe:

To

To miſs BETSY THOUGHTLESS.

'*My dear ſiſter*,

'I SHALL leave Oxford to-morrow, 'in order to croſs the country for the 'ſeat of ſir Ralph Truſty, as I ſuppoſe 'mr. Goodman will inform you, I having 'wrote to him by the poſt; but the moſt 'valuable of my friends being going to 'London, and expreſſing a deſire of re-'newing that acquaintance he had begun 'to commence with you here, I have ta-'ken the liberty of troubling him with 'the delivery of this to you. He is a 'gentleman whoſe merits you are yet a 'ſtranger to, but I have ſo good an 'opinion of your penetration, as to be 'confident a very little time will convince 'you, that he is deſerving all the eſteem 'in your power to regard him with: in 'the mean time doubt not, but you will 'receive him as a perſon whoſe ſucceſs, 'in every thing, is much deſired by him, 'who is,

'With the tendereſt good wiſhes,

'Dear ſiſter,

'Your moſt affectionate brother,

'F. THOUGHTLESS.'

As

As ſhe did not doubt but, by the ſtile and manner of this letter, that it had been ſeen by mr. Trueworth, ſhe could not keep herſelf from bluſhing, which he obſerving as he ſat, flattered himſelf with taking as a good omen. He had too much awe upon him, however, to make any declaration of his paſſion at firſt viſit, neither, indeed, had he the opportunity of doing it, lady Mellaſin, and miſs Flora, thinking they had left mr. Staple and miſs Betſy a ſufficient time together, came into the room: the former was ſurpriſed to find he was gone, and a ſtrange gentleman in his place; but miſs Flora remembering him perfectly well, they ſaluted each other with the freedom of perſons who were not entire ſtrangers, they entered into a converſation, and other company coming in, mr. Trueworth had an opportunity of diſplaying the fine talents he was maſter of: his travels, — the obſervations he had made on the curioſities he had ſeen abroad, particularly at Rome, Florence, and Naples, were highly entertaining to the company; on taking leave he told the ladies, he hoped they would allow him the favour of making one at their tea-table ſometimes, while he remained in London: to which lady Mellaſin and her daughter, little ſuſpecting the motive he had for this requeſt,

requeſt, joined in aſſuring him, he could not come too often, and that they ſhould expect to ſee him every day; but miſs Betſy looking on herſelf as chiefly concerned in his admiſſion, modeſtly added to what they had ſaid, only that a perſon ſo much, and ſhe doubted not but ſo juſtly, eſteemed by her brother, might be certain of a ſincere welcome from her.

Every body was full of the praiſes of this gentleman, and miſs Betſy, though ſhe ſaid the leaſt of any one, thought her brother had not beſtowed more on him, than he really deſerved. Mr. Goodman coming home ſoon after, there appeared ſome marks of diſpleaſure in his countenance, which, as he was the beſt humoured man in the world, very much ſurpriſed thoſe of his family; but the company not being all retired, none of them ſeemed to take any notice of it, and went on with the converſation they were upon before his entrance.

The viſitors, however, were no ſooner gone, than without ſtaying to be aſked, he immediately let them into the occaſion of his being ſo much ruffled: "miſs "Betſy," ſaid he, "you have uſed me "very ill: I did not think you would "have

" have made a fool of me in the manner " you have done." " Bleſs me, ſir," cried ſhe, " in what have I offended?" " You have not only offended againſt me," anſwered he, very haſtily, " but alſo " againſt your own reaſon, and common " underſtanding: you are young, 'tis " true, yet not ſo young as not to know " it is both ungenerous and ſilly to im- " poſe upon your friends." " I ſcorn the " thought, ſir, of impoſing upon any " body," ſaid ſhe; " I therefore deſire, " ſir, you will tell me what you mean " by ſo unjuſt an accuſation." " Unjuſt! reſumed he, " I appeal to the whole world, " if it were well done of you to ſuffer " me to encourage my friend's courtſhip " to you, when at the ſame time your " brother had engaged you to receive the " addreſſes of another."

Miſs Betſy, though far from thinking it a fault in her to hear the propoſals of a hundred lovers, had as many offered themſelves, was yet a little ſhocked at the reprimand given her by mr. Goodman; and not being able preſently to make any reply to what he had ſaid, he took a letter he had juſt received from her brother out of his pocket, and threw it on the table, with theſe words: " That will ſhew," ſaid he, " whether I have not cauſe to " reſent

" reſent your behaviour in this point." Perceiving ſhe was about to take it up, " Hold," cried he, " my wife ſhall read " it, and be the judge between us."

Lady Mellaſin, who had not ſpoke all this time, then took the letter, and read aloud the contents, which were theſe:

To mr. GOODMAN.

' *Sir*,

' THIS comes to let you know I have ' received the remittances you were ' ſo obliging to ſend me. I think to ſet ' out to-morrow for L———e, but ſhall ' not ſtay there for any length of time: ' my intentions for going into the army ' are the ſame as when I laſt wrote to ' you, and the more I conſider on that ' affair, the more I am confirmed that a ' military life is moſt ſuitable of any to ' my genius and humour: if, therefore, ' you can hear of any thing proper for ' me, either in the guards, or in a march- ' ing regiment, againſt I come to town, ' I ſhall be infinitely thankful for the ' trouble you take in the enquiry; but, ' ſir, this is not all the favour I have to ' aſk of you at preſent. A gentleman of ' family, fortune, and character, has ſeen ' my ſiſter, likes her, and is going to

' London

'London, on no other buſineſs than to 'make his addreſſes to her. I have al-'ready wrote to her on this ſubject, and 'I believe ſhe will pay ſome regard to 'what I have ſaid in his behalf. I am 'very well aſſured ſhe never can have a 'more advantageous offer, as to his cir-'cumſtances, nor be united to a man of 'more true honour, morality, and ſweet-'neſs of diſpoſition; all which I have had 'frequent occaſions of being an eye-wit-'neſs of: but ſhe is young, gay, and as yet, 'perhaps, not altogether ſo capable as I 'could wiſh of knowing what will make 'for her real happineſs; I therefore intreat 'you, ſir, as the long experienced friend 'of our family, to forward this match, 'both by your advice, and whatever elſe 'is in your power, which certainly will 'be the greateſt act of goodneſs you can 'confer on her, as well as the higheſt ob-'ligation to a brother, who wiſhes nothing 'more than to ſee her ſecured from all 'temptations, and well ſettled in the 'world. I am,

'With the greateſt reſpect,

'Sir,

'Your moſt humble,

'And moſt obedient ſervant,

'F. THOUGHTLESS.

'P. S.

'P. S. I had forgot to inform you, ſir, 'that the name of the gentleman, I take 'the liberty of recommending with ſo 'much warmth, is Trueworth; that he 'is deſcended from the ancient Britons 'by the father's ſide, and by the mo-'ther's from the honourable and well 'known Oldcaſtle's, in Kent.'

"O, fye miſs Betſy," ſaid lady Mellaſin, 'how could you ſerve mr. Goodman "ſo? What will mr. Staple ſay, when he "comes to know he was encouraged to "court a woman that was already pre-en-"gaged." "Pre-engaged, madam," cried miſs Betſy, in a ſcornful tone, "what to a man I never ſaw but three "times in my whole life, and whoſe "mouth never uttered a ſyllable of love "to me." She was going on, but mr. Goodman, who was ſtill in a great heat, interrupted her, ſaying, "No matter "whether he has uttered any thing of the "buſineſs or not, it ſeems you are enough "acquainted with his ſentiments, and I "doubt not but he knows you are, or he "would not have taken a journey to Lon-"don on your account. You ought there-"fore to have told me of his coming, "and what your brother had wrote con-"cerning him, and I ſhould then have

"let

" let mr. Staple know it would be to no
" purpoſe to make any courtſhip to you,
" as I did to another juſt before I came
" home, who I find has taken a great
" fancy to you; but I have given him
" his anſwer; for my part I do not un-
" derſtand this way of making gentle-
" men loſe their time."

'Tis probable theſe laſt words nettled miſs Betſy more than all the reſt he had ſaid; ſhe imagined herſelf ſecure of the hearts of both Trueworth and Staple, but was vexed to the heart to have loſt the addreſſes of a third admirer, through the ſcruplouſneſs of mr. Goodman, who ſhe looked upon to have nothing to do with her affairs in this particular: ſhe was too cunning, however, to let him ſee what her thoughts were on that occaſion, and only ſaid that he might do as he pleaſed; — that ſhe did not want a huſband; — that all men were alike to her: — but added, that it ſeemed ſtrange to her, that a young woman who had her fortune to make might not be allowed to hear all the different propoſals ſhould be offered to her on that ſcore, and with theſe words flung out of the room, and went up into her chamber, nor would be prevailed upon to come down again that night, though miſs Flora, and mr. Goodman him-

himſelf, repenting he had ſaid ſo much, called to her for that purpoſe.

CHAP. XVI.

Preſents the reader with the name and character of miſs Betſy's third lover, and alſo with ſome other particulars.

THOUGH lady Mellaſin had ſeemed to blame miſs Betſy for not having communicated to mr. Goodman what her brother wrote to her in relation to mr. Trueworth, yet in her heart ſhe was far from being averſe to her receiving a plurality of lovers, becauſe whenever that young lady ſhould fix her choice, there was a poſſibility ſome one or other of thoſe ſhe rejected might tranſmit his addreſſes to her daughter, whom ſhe was extremely deſirous of getting married, and had never yet been once ſollicited on honourable terms: — ſhe therefore told her huſband, that he ought not to hinder miſs Betſy from hearing what every gentleman had to offer, to the end ſhe might accept that which had the proſpect of moſt advantage to her.

Mr. Goodman in this, as in every thing elſe, ſuffered himſelf to be directed by her judgment, and the next morning, when miſs Betſy came down, talked to her with his uſual pleaſantry. "Well," ſaid he, "have you forgiven my ill humour laſt "night? I was a little vexed to think "my friend Staple had ſo poor a chance "for gaining you, and the more ſo be-"cauſe Frank Thoughtleſs will take it ill "of me, that I have done any thing in "oppoſition to the perſon he recom-"mends; but you muſt act as you "pleaſe; for my part I ſhall not meddle "any farther in theſe affairs.

"Sir," replied miſs Betſy, very gravely, "I ſhall always be thankful to my friends "for their advice, and whenever I think "ſeriouſly of a huſband ſhall not fail to "intreat yours in my choice; but," continued ſhe, "one would imagine my bro-"ther, by writing ſo preſſingly to you, "wanted to hurry me into a marriage "whether I would or no; and though I "have as much regard for him, as a "ſiſter can or ought to have, yet I ſhall "never be prevailed upon by him to en-"ter into a ſtate to which at preſent I "have rather an averſion than inclination."

"That

"That is," ſaid mr. Goodman, "you "have rather an averſion, than an incli- "nation, to the perſons who addreſs "you on that ſcore." "No, ſir," anſwered ſhe, "not at all: the perſons and "behaviour, both of mr. Trueworth and "mr. Staple, appear to me to be unex- "ceptionable; but ſure one may allow a "man to have merit, and be pleaſed with "his converſation, without deſiring to be "tacked to him for ever. I verily be- "lieve I ſhall never be in love; but if I "am, it muſt be a long length of time, "and a ſeries of perſevering aſſiduities "muſt make me ſo."

Mr. Goodman told her, theſe were only romantic notions, which, he doubted not, but a little time would cure her of. What reply miſs Betſy would have made is uncertain, for the diſcourſe was interrupted by a footman delivering a letter to her, in which ſhe found theſe lines:

To miſs BETSY THOUGHTLESS.

'*Fair Creature,*'

'I AM no courtier, — no beau, — and 'have hitherto had but little commu- 'nication with your ſex; but I am honeſt 'and ſincere, and you may depend on

'the truth of what I ſay. I have, hea-
'ven be praiſed, acquired a very large
'fortune, and for ſome time have had
'thoughts of marrying, to the end I
'might have a ſon to enjoy the fruit of
'my labours, after I am food either for
'the fiſhes, or the worms;—it is no
'great matter which of them. Now I
'have been wiſhed to ſeveral fine women,
'but my fancy gives the preference to
'you; and if you can like me as well,
'we ſhall be very happy together. I
'ſpoke to your guardian yeſterday, for I
'love to be above-board; but he ſeemed
'to lour, or, as we ſay at ſea, to be a little
'hazy on the matter, ſo I thought I
'would trouble him no farther, but write
'directly to you. I hear there are two
'about you; but what of that? I have
'doubled the Cape of Good Hope many
'a time, and never failed of reaching my
'intended port, I therefore ſee no cauſe
'why I ſhould apprehend a wreck by
'land. I am turned of eight and forty,
''tis true, which may-be you may think
'too old; but I muſt tell you, dear pretty
'one, that I have a conſtitution that will
'wear out twenty of your waſhy pampered
'landmen of not half my age. What-
'ever your fortune is I will ſettle accor-
'dingly, and moreover will ſecure ſome-
'thing handſome to you at my deceaſe,

'in

'in caſe you ſhould chance to be the 'longeſt liver. I know you young wo-'men do not care a man ſhould have any 'thing under your hand, ſo expect no an-'ſwer; but deſire you will conſider on 'my propoſals, and let me know your 'mind this evening at five o'clock, when 'I ſhall come to mr. Goodman's, let him 'take it how he will. I can weather out 'any ſtorm to come at you, and ſincere-'ly am,

'Dear Soul,

'Your moſt faithful,

'And affectionate lover,

'J. HYSOM.'

There were ſome paſſages in this letter that ſet miſs Betſy into ſuch immoderate fits of laughter, as made her a long time in going through it. Having finiſhed the whole, ſhe turned to mr. Goodman, and putting it into his hands, "Be pleaſed, "ſir, to read that," ſaid ſhe, "you ſhall "own, at leaſt, that I do not make a ſe-"cret of all my lovers to you." Mr. Goodman ſoon looked it over, and after returning it to her, "How troubleſome a "thing it is," ſaid he, "to be the guar-"dian of a beautiful young lady! whether

" I grant, or whether I refuſe the conſent
" required of me, I equally gain ill-will
" from one ſide or the other."

Lady Mellaſin, who had all this morning complained of a violent head-ach, and ſaid nothing during this converſation, now cried out, " What new conqueſt is this " miſs Betſy has made?" " O, madam, replied miſs Betſy, " your ladyſhip ſhall " judge of the value of it, by the " doughty epiſtle I have juſt received." With theſe words ſhe gave the letter to miſs Flora, deſiring her to read it aloud, which ſhe did, but was obliged, as miſs Betſy herſelf had done, to ſtop ſeveral times, and hold her ſides, before ſhe got to the concluſion, and lady Mellaſin, as little as ſhe was then inclined to mirth, could not forbear ſmiling at hearing the manner in which this declaration of love was penned. " You are all very merry," ſaid mr. Goodman, " but I can tell you, " captain Hyſom is a match that many " a fine lady in this town would jump at; " he has been twenty-five years in the ſer- " vice of the Eaſt-India company, has " made very ſucceſsful voyages, and is " immenſely rich; he has lived at ſea, " indeed, the greateſt part of his life, and " much politeneſs cannot be expected from " him; but he is a very honeſt good-na-

" tured

" tured man, and I believe means well.
" I wiſh he had offered himſelf to Flora."
" Perhaps, ſir, I ſhould not have refuſed
" him," replied ſhe, briſkly; " I ſhould
" like a huſband prodigiouſly that would
" be abroad for three whole years toge-
" ther, and leave me to bowl about in
" my coach and ſix, while he ploughed
" the ocean in ſearch of new treaſures to
" throw into my lap at his return."

" Well, well," ſaid miſs Betſy, laugh-
ing ſtill more, " who knows but when I
" have teized him a little, he may fly for
" ſhelter to your more clement goodneſs."
" Aye! aye," cried mr. Goodman, " you
" are a couple of mad-caps, indeed, and
" I ſuppoſe between you both the captain
" will be finely managed; but no matter,
" I ſhall not pity him, as I partly told
" him what he might expect."

After this mr. Goodman went out, and the young ladies went up to dreſs againſt dinner, diverting themſelves all the time with the poor captain's letter. Miſs Betſy told miſs Flora, that as he was for coming ſo directly to the point, ſhe muſt uſe all her artifice, in order to keep him in ſuſpence; " for," ſaid ſhe, " if I ſhould let
" him know any part of my real ſenti-
" ments concerning him, he would be

" gone at once, and we ſhould loſe all " our ſport: I will, therefore," continued ſhe, " make him believe, that I dare not " openly encourage his pretenſions, be- " cauſe my brother had recommended one " gentleman to me, and mr. Goodman " another; but ſhall aſſure him, at the " ſame time, that I am inclined to neither " of them, and ſhall contrive to get rid " of them both, as ſoon as poſſible: this," ſaid ſhe, " will keep him in hopes, with- " out my downright promiſing any thing " in his particular favour."

Miſs Flora told her, ſhe was a perfect Machiavel in love affairs, and was about to ſay ſomething more, when a confuſed ſound of ſeveral voices, among which ſhe diſtinguiſhed that of lady Mellaſin very loud, made her run down ſtairs to ſee what was the occaſion; but miſs Betſy ſtayed in the chamber, being buſily employed in ſomething belonging to her dreſs, or had ſhe been leſs engaged, it is not probable ſhe would have troubled herſelf about the matter, as ſhe ſuppoſed it only a quarrel between lady Mellaſin, and ſome of the ſervants, as in effect it was, and ſhe, without aſking, was immediately informed.

Nanny,

Nanny, the upper houſe-maid, and the ſame who had delivered mr. Saving's letter to miſs Betſy, and carried her anſwer to him, coming up with a broom in her hand, in order to ſweep her lady's dreſſing-room, ran into the chamber of miſs Betſy, and ſeeing that ſhe was alone, "O "miſs!" ſaid ſhe, "there is the devil to "do below." "I heard a ſad noiſe, in-"deed," ſaid ſhe careleſly. "Why you "muſt know, miſs," cried the maid, "that my lady had given John the but-"ler warning, and ſo his time being up, "mrs. Prinks had orders to pay him off "this morning, but would have ſtopped "thirty ſhillings for a ſilver orange ſtrainer "that is miſſing. John would not allow "it, and being in a paſſion, told mrs. "Prinks, that he would not leave the "houſe without his full wages; that for "any thing he knew the ſtrainer might "be gone after the diamond necklace. "This I ſuppoſe ſhe repeated to my lady, "and that put her in ſo ill a humour "this morning, that if my maſter had "not come down as he did, we ſhould "all have had ſomething at our heads. "However," continued the wench, "ſhe "ordered mrs. Prinks to give him his "whole money; but, would you believe "it, miſs? My maſter was no ſooner

" gone out, than ſhe came down into the " kitchen raving, and finding John there " ſtill, (the poor fellow, God knows, only " ſtayed to take his leave of us,) ſhe tore " about, and ſwore we ſhould all go; ac- " cuſed one of one thing, and another of " another." " Well, but what did the fel- " low mean about the diamond necklace?" cried miſs Betſy, interrupting her. " I " will tell you the whole ſtory," ſaid ſhe, " but you muſt promiſe never to ſpeak a " word of it to any body; for though I " do not value the place, nor will ſtay " much longer; yet they would not give " one a character, you know, miſs."

Miſs Betſy then having aſſured her, ſhe would never mention it, the other ſhut the door, and went on in a very low voice, in this manner.

' Don't you remember, miſs,' ſaid ſhe, ' what a flurry my lady and mrs. Prinks ' were in one day? how her ladyſhip ' pulled off all her fine cloaths, and they ' both went out in a hackney coach; ' then mrs. Prinks came home, and went ' out again?' ' Yes,' replied miſs Betſy, ' I took notice they were both in a good ' deal of confuſion.' ' Aye, miſs, well ' they might,' ſaid Nanny; ' that very af- ' ternoon John was gone to ſee a Couſin

' that

'that keeps a pawn-broker's ſhop in 'Thieving-lane, and as he was ſitting in 'a little room behind the counter, that 'it ſeems ſhuts in with glaſs doors, who 'ſhould he ſee through the window, but 'mrs. Prinks come in; ſhe brought my 'lady's diamond necklace, and pledged 'it for a hundred and twenty, or a hun-'dred and thirty guineas, I am not ſure 'which he told me, for I have the ſad-'deſt memory; but it is no matter for 'that. John was ſtrangely confounded, 'as you may think, but reſolved to ſee 'into the bottom, and when mrs. Prinks 'was got into the coach, popped up be-'hind it, and got down when it ſtopped, 'which was at the ſign of the hand and 'tipſtaff in Knaves-acre; ſo that this mo-'ney was raiſed to get ſomebody that 'was arreſted out of the bailiff's hands, 'for John ſaid, it was what they call a 'ſpunging-houſe that mrs. Prinks went 'into. Lord! how deceitful ſome people 'are, my poor maſter little thinks how 'his money goes; but I'll warrant our 'houſe-keeping muſt ſuffer for this.'

This goſſiping young huſſey would have run on much longer, doubtleſs, with her comments on this affair; but hearing miſs Flora's foot upon the ſtairs, ſhe left off, and opening the door, ſoftly ſlipt in-

" gone out, than ſhe came down into the " kitchen raving, and finding John there " ſtill, (the poor fellow, God knows, only " ſtayed to take his leave of us,) ſhe tore " about, and ſwore we ſhould all go; ac- " cuſed one of one thing, and another of " another." " Well, but what did the fel- " low mean about the diamond necklace?" cried miſs Betſy, interrupting her. " I " will tell you the whole ſtory," ſaid ſhe, " but you muſt promiſe never to ſpeak a " word of it to any body; for though I " do not value the place, nor will ſtay " much longer; yet they would not give " one a character, you know, miſs."

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' Don't you remember, miſs,' ſaid ſhe, ' what a flurry my lady and mrs. Prinks ' were in one day? how her ladyſhip ' pulled off all her fine cloaths, and they ' both went out in a hackney coach; ' then mrs. Prinks came home, and went ' out again?' ' Yes,' replied miſs Betſy, ' I took notice they were both in a good ' deal of confuſion.' ' Aye, miſs, well ' they might,' ſaid Nanny; ' that very af- ' ternoon John was gone to ſee a Couſin

' that

'that keeps a pawn-broker's ſhop in 'Thieving-lane, and as he was ſitting in 'a little room behind the counter, that 'it ſeems ſhuts in with glaſs doors, who 'ſhould he ſee through the window, but 'mrs. Prinks come in; ſhe brought my 'lady's diamond necklace, and pledged 'it for a hundred and twenty, or a hun-'dred and thirty guineas, I am not ſure 'which he told me, for I have the ſad-'deſt memory; but it is no matter for 'that. John was ſtrangely confounded, 'as you may think, but reſolved to ſee 'into the bottom, and when mrs. Prinks 'was got into the coach, popped up be-'hind it, and got down when it ſtopped, 'which was at the ſign of the hand and 'tipſtaff in Knaves-acre; ſo that this mo-'ney was raiſed to get ſomebody that 'was arreſted out of the bailiff's hands, 'for John ſaid, it was what they call a 'ſpunging-houſe that mrs. Prinks went 'into. Lord! how deceitful ſome people 'are, my poor maſter little thinks how 'his money goes; but I'll warrant our 'houſe-keeping muſt ſuffer for this.'

This goſſiping young huſſey would have run on much longer, doubtleſs, with her comments on this affair; but hearing miſs Flora's foot upon the ſtairs, ſhe left off, and opening the door, ſoftly ſlipt in-

to her lady's dreſſing-room, and fell to work in cleaning it.

Miſs Flora came up, exclaiming on the ill behaviour of moſt ſervants, telling miſs Betſy what a paſſion her mamma had been in. The other made little anſwer to what ſhe ſaid on that or any other ſcore, having her thoughts very much taken up with the account juſt given her by Nanny; ſhe recollected that lady Mellaſin had never dreſſed ſince that day, always making ſome excuſe to avoid paying any grand viſits, which ſhe now doubted not but it was becauſe ſhe had not her necklace. It very much amazed her, as ſhe well knew her ladyſhip was never without a good deal of ready caſh, therefore was certain the ſum muſt be large indeed, for which her friend was arreſted, that it reduced her to the neceſſity of applying to a pawn-broker, and who that friend could be for whom ſhe would thus demean herſelf, puzzled her extremely. It was not long, however, before ſhe was let into the ſecret, but in the mean time other matters of more moment muſt be treated on.

CHAP.

CHAP. XVII.

Is of leſs importance than the former, yet muſt not be omitted.

LADY Mellaſin having vented her ſpleen on thoſe, who by their ſtations were obliged to bear it, and the object of it removed out of the houſe, became extremely chearful the remaining part of the day. The faſhion in which it might be ſuppoſed miſs Betſy would be accoſted by her tarpaulin enamorato, and the reception ſhe would give his paſſion, occaſioned a great deal of merriment, and even mr. Goodman, ſeeing his dear wife took part in it, would ſometimes throw in his joke.

"Well, well," cried miſs Betſy, to heighten the diverſion, "what will you "ſay now, if I ſhould take a fancy to the "captain, ſo far as to prefer him to any "of thoſe who think it worth their while "to ſollicit me on the ſcore of love?"

"This is quite ungenerous in you," cried miſs Flora, "did you not promiſe "to turn the captain over to me, when "you had done with him."—"That "may

" may not happen a great while," replied the other; " for I aſſure you I have ſeen him " three or four times, when he has called " here on buſineſs to mr. Goodman, and " think to part with a lover of his for- " midable aſpect would be to deprive " myſelf of the moſt conſpicuous of my " whole train of admirers; — but ſup- " poſe," continued ſhe, in the ſame gay ſtrain, " I reſign to you mr. Staple or " mr. Trueworth, would not that do as " well?"

" Do not put me in the head of either " of them, I beſeech you," ſaid miſs Flora, " for fear I ſhould think too ſeriouſly on " the matter, and it ſhould not be in " your power to oblige me."

" All that muſt be left to chance," cried miſs Betſy; " but ſo far I dare pro- " miſe you, as to do enough to make " them heartily weary of their courtſhip " to me, and at liberty to make their ad- " dreſſes elſewhere."

After this they fell into ſome converſation concerning the merits of the two laſt mentioned gentlemen: — they allowed mr. Staple to have the fineſt face, and that mr. Trueworth was the beſt ſhaped, and had the moſt graceful air in every thing

thing he did: — mr. Staple had an infinity of gaiety, both in his look and behaviour: — mr. Trueworth had no leſs of ſweetneſs, and if his deportment ſeemed ſomewhat too ſerious for a man of his years, it was well atoned for by the excellence of his underſtanding. — Miſs Flora however ſaid, upon the whole, that both of them were charming men, and lady Mellaſin added, that it was a great pity either of them ſhould have beſtowed his heart where there was ſo little likelihood of ever receiving any recompence. — "Why ſo, my dear," cried mr. Goodman, "if my pretty charge is at preſent "in a humour to make as many fools as "ſhe can in this world, I hope ſhe is not "determined to lead apes in another; — "I warrant ſhe will change her mind one "time or other. — I only wiſh ſhe may "not, as the old ſaying is, out-ſtand her "market."

While they were thus diſcourſing, a ſervant brought a letter from mr. Staple, directed to miſs Betſy Thoughtleſs, which was immediately delivered to her: — on being told from whence it came, gave it to mr. Goodman, ſaying, "I ſhall make no "ſecret of the contents, — therefore, dear "guardian, read it for the benefit of the "company."

Mr.

Mr. Goodman ſhook his head at the little ſenſibility ſhe teſtified of his friend's devoirs, but ſaid nothing, being willing to gratify the curioſity he doubted not but they all were in, miſs Betſy herſelf not excepted, as careleſs as ſhe affected to be, which he did by reading in an audible voice theſe lines:

To the moſt amiable and moſt accompliſhed of her ſex.

'*Madam*,

'IF the face be the index of the mind, (as I think one of our beſt poets takes upon him to aſſert) your ſoul muſt certainly be all made up of harmony, and conſequently take delight in what has ſo great a ſimilitude of its own heavenly nature. — I flatter myſelf, therefore, you will not be offended that I preſume to intreat you will grace with your preſence, a piece of muſic, compoſed by the ſo juſtly celebrated ſignor Bonancini, and I hope will have juſtice done it in the performance, — they being the beſt hands in town that are employed.

'I do myſelf the honour to incloſe tickets for the ladies of mr. Goodman's family, and beg leave to wait on you

'this

'this afternoon, in the pleaſing expecta-
'tion, not only of being permitted to at-
'tend you to the concert, but alſo of an
'opportunity of renewing thoſe humble
'and ſincere profeſſions I yeſterday be-
'gan to make, of a paſſion, which only
'charms ſuch as yours could have the
'power of inſpiring in any heart, and can
'be felt by none with greater warmth,
'zeal, tenderneſs, and reſpect, than by
'that of him who is, and ever muſt be,

'Madam,

'Your moſt paſſionate,

'And moſt faithful admirer,

'T. STAPLE.

'P. S. If there are any other ladies of
'your acquaintance, to whom you think
'the entertainment may be agreeable,
'be pleaſed to make the invitation, —
'I ſhall bring tickets with me to ac-
'commodate whoever you chooſe to
'accompany you. — Once more I be-
'ſeech you, madam, to believe me as
'above,

'Yours, &c.'

Mr.

Mr. Goodman had ſcarce finiſhed reading this letter, when lady Mellaſin and her daughter both cried out, at the ſame time, "O miſs Betſy, — how unlucky "this happens: — what will you do with "the captain now?"

"We will take him with us to the "concert," replied ſhe; — "and in my "opinion nothing could have fallen out "more fortunately. — The captain has "appointed to viſit me at five, — mr. "Staple will, doubtleſs, be here about "that time, if not before, in order to "uſher us to the entertainment, ſo that "my tar cannot expect any anſwer from "me to his letter, and conſequently I "ſhall gain time."

Though mr. Goodman was far from approving this way of proceeding, yet he could not forbear ſmiling with the reſt, at miſs Betſy's contrivance, and told her, it was a pity ſhe was not a man, ſhe would have made a rare miniſter of ſtate.

"Well, ſince it is ſo," ſaid lady Mellaſin, "I will have the honour of com-"plimenting the captain with the ticket "mr. Staple intended for me." Both miſs Flora and miſs Betſy preſſed her ladyſhip

ladyſhip to be of their company, and mr. Goodman likewiſe endeavoured to perſwade her to go; but ſhe excuſed herſelf, ſaying, "A concert was never among "the number of thoſe entertainments ſhe "took pleaſure in:" on which they left off ſpeaking any farther on it; — but miſs Betſy was not at a loſs in her own mind to gueſs the true reaſon of her ladyſhip's refuſal, and looked on it as a confirmation of the truth of what Nanny had told her, concerning the diamond necklace.

There ſeemed, notwithſtanding, one difficulty ſtill remaining for miſs Betſy to get over; which was the probability of mr. Trueworth's making her a viſit that afternoon; — ſhe did not chooſe to leave him to go to the concert, nor yet to aſk him to accompany them to it, becauſe ſhe thought it would be eaſy for a man of his penetration to diſcover that mr. Staple was his rival; which ſhe was by no means willing he ſhould do before he had made a declaration to her of his own paſſion.

She was beginning to conſider how ſhe ſhould manage in a point, which ſhe looked upon as pretty delicate, when a letter from that gentleman eaſed her of all the apprehenſions ſhe at preſent had,

on

on his ſcore. — The manner in which he expreſſed himſelf was as follows:

To miſs BETSY THOUGHTLESS.

'*Madam*,

'I Remember (as what can be forgot in which you have the leaſt concern) 'that the firſt time I had the honour of 'ſeeing you at Oxford, you ſeemed to 'take a great deal of pleaſure in the pretty 'tricks of a ſquirrel, which a lady in the 'company had on her arm: — one of 'thoſe animals (which they tell me has 'been lately catched) happening to fall 'in my way, I take the liberty of pre-'ſenting him to you, intreating you will 'permit him to give you ſuch diverſion 'as is in his power. — Were the little 'denizen of the woods endued with any 'ſhare of human reaſon, how happy would 'he think himſelf in the loſs of his liberty, 'and how hug thoſe chains which entitle 'him to ſo glorious a ſervitude.'

'I had waited on you in perſon, in the 'hope of obtaining pardon for approach-'ing you with ſo trifling an offering; but 'am deprived of that ſatisfaction by the 'preſſing commands of an old aunt, who 'inſiſts on my paſſing this evening with 'her: — but what need is there to apo-

'logize

'logize for the abſence of a perſon ſo 'little known to you, and whoſe ſenti-'ments are yet leſs ſo? I rather ought to 'fear that the frequency of thoſe viſits I 'ſhall hereafter make, may be looked 'upon as taking too preſuming an ad-'vantage of the permiſſion you have been 'ſo good to give me. I will not, how-'ever, anticipate ſo great a misfortune, but 'endeavour to prevent it by proving, by 'all the ways I am able, that I am,

'With the moſt profound ſubmiſſion,

'Madam,

'Your very humble, obedient,

'And eternally devoted ſervant,

'C. TRUEWORTH.'

Miſs Betſy, after having read this letter, ordered the perſon who brought it ſhould come into the parlour; on which he delivered to her the preſent mentioned in the letter, which ſhe received with a great deal of ſweetneſs, gave the fellow ſomething to drink her health, and ſent her ſervice to his maſter, with thanks, and an aſſurance that ſhe ſhould be glad to ſee him, whenever it ſuited with his convenience.

All

All the ladies then began to examine the ſquirrel, which was, doubtleſs, the moſt beautiful creature of its kind, that could be purchaſed: the chain, which faſtened it to its habitation, was gold, the links very thick, and curiouſly wrought. — Every one admired the elegance of the donor's taſte.

Miſs Betſy herſelf was charmed to an exceſs, both with the letter and the preſent; but as much as ſhe was pleaſed with the reſpectful paſſion of mr. Trueworth, ſhe could not find in her heart to think of parting with the aſſiduities of mr. Staple, nor even the blunt addreſſes of captain Hyſom, at leaſt 'till ſhe had exerciſed all the power her beauty gave her over them.

As the two laſt mentioned gentlemen were the friends of mr. Goodman, he went out ſomewhat before the hour in which either of them was expected to come, chooſing not to ſeem to know what it was not in his power to amend, and determined, as he had promiſed miſs Betſy, not to interfere between her and any of thoſe who pretended to court her.

Theſe

Theſe two lovers came to the door at the ſame time, and mr. Staple ſaying to the footman that opened the door, that he was come to wait on miſs Betſy. — "I "want to ſpeak with that young gentle- "woman too," cried the captain, "if "ſhe be at leiſure: — tell her my name "is Hyſom."

Mr. Staple was immediately ſhewed up into the dining-room, and the captain in the parlour, 'till miſs Betſy ſhould be told his name: "That ſpark," ſaid he to him- ſelf, "I find is known here, I ſuppoſe he "is one of thoſe mr. Goodman told me "of, that has a mind to miſs Betſy; but "as ſhe knew I was to be here, I think "ſhe might have left ſome orders con- "cerning me, and not made me wait till "that young gew-gaw had ſpoke his "mind to her."

The fellow not coming down immedi- ately, he grew very angry, and began to call and knock with his cane againſt the floor, which, it may be eaſily imagined, gave ſome ſport to thoſe above. — Miſs Betſy, however, having told mr. Staple the character of the man, and the diver- ſion ſhe intended to make of his preten- ſions, would not vex him too much, and

to

to atone for having made him attend ſo long, went to the top of the ſtairs herſelf, and deſired him to walk up.

The reception ſhe gave him was full of all the ſweetneſs ſhe could aſſume, and excuſed having made him wait, and laid the blame on the ſervant, who, ſhe pretended, could not preſently recollect his name: — this put him into an exceeding good humour, "Nay, fair lady," ſaid he, "as to that I have ſtayed much longer "ſometimes, before I could get to the "ſpeech of ſome people, who I have not "half the reſpect for as I have for you; "— but you know," continued he, giving her a kiſs, the ſmack of which might be heard three rooms off, "that I have "buſineſs with you, — buſineſs that re"quires diſpatch, and that made me a "little impatient."

All the company had much ado to refrain laughing out-right, but miſs Betſy kept her countenance to a miracle, "We "will talk of buſineſs another time," ſaid ſhe, "we are going to hear a fine en"tertainment of muſick; — you muſt not "refuſe giving us your company, — lady "Mellaſin has got a ticket on purpoſe "for you. — "I am very much obliged "to her ladyſhip," replied the captain,

" but I do not know whether mr. Good-
" man may think well of it or not; for
" he would fain have put me off from
" viſiting his charge here. — I ſoon
" found by his way of ſpeaking the wind
" did not ſet fair for me from that quar-
" ter, ſo tacked about, — ſhifted my
" ſails, and ſtood for the port directly."

" Manfully reſolved, indeed!" ſaid mr. Staple; " but I hope, captain, you have " kept a good look-out, in order to avoid " any ſhip of greater burthen, that might " elſe chance to overſet you."—Oh, ſir! as " to that," replied the captain, " you " might have ſpared yourſelf the trouble " of giving me this caution, there are " only two ſmall pinks in my way, and " they had beſt ſtand clear, or I ſhall run " foul on them."

Though mr. Staple had been apprized before-hand of the captain's pretences, and that miſs Betſy intended to encourage them only by way of amuſement to herſelf and friends, yet the rough manner in which his rival had uttered theſe words, brought the blood into his cheeks, which lady Mellaſin perceiving, and fearing that what was began in jeſt might in the end become more ſerious than could be wiſhed, turned the converſation, and ad-

dreſſing herſelf to the captain, on the ſcore of what he had ſaid concerning mr. Goodman, made many apologies for her husband's behaviour in this point: — aſſured him, that he had not a more ſincere friend in the world, nor one who would be more ready to ſerve him, in whatever was in his power.

The captain had a fund of great goodnature in his heart, but was ſomewhat too much addicted to paſſion, and frequently apt to reſent without a cauſe, but when once convinced he had been in the wrong, no one could be more ready to acknowlege and aſk pardon for his miſtake: — he had been bred at ſea; — his converſation, for almoſt his whole life, had been chiefly among thoſe of his own occupation; — he was altogether unacquainted with the manners and behaviour of the polite world, and equally a ſtranger to what is called genteel raillery, as he was to courtly complaiſance; it is not, therefore, to be wondered at, that he was often rude, without deſigning to be ſo, and took many things as affronts, which were not meant as ſuch.

Lady Mellaſin, who never wanted words, and knew how to expreſs herſelf in the moſt perſwaſive terms, whenever ſhe pleaſed

pleaſed to make uſe of them, had the addreſs to convince the captain, that mr. Goodman was no enemy to his ſuit, though he would not appear to encourage it.

While the captain was engaged with her ladyſhip in this diſcourſe, miſs Betſy took the opportunity of telling mr. Staple that ſhe inſiſted upon it, that he ſhould be very civil to a rival from whoſe pretenſions he might be certain he had nothing to apprehend, and moreover that when ſhe gave him her hand to lead her into the concert-room, he ſhould give his to miſs Flora, without diſcovering the leaſt marks of diſcontent: — the lover looked on this laſt injunction as too ſevere a trial of his patience; but ſhe would needs have it ſo, and he was under a neceſſity of obeying, or of ſuffering much greater mortification from her diſpleaſure.

Soon after this they all four went to the entertainment in mr. Goodman's coach, which lady Mellaſin had ordered to be got ready. — The captain was mightily pleaſed with the muſic, and had judgment enough in it to know it was better than the band he had on board his ſhip: — "When "they have done playing," ſaid he, "I "will aſk them what they will have to

" go with me the next voyage;" but mr. Staple told him, it would be an affront, that they were men who got more by their inſtruments than the beſt officer either by ſea or land did by his commiſſion. — This miſtake, as well as many others the captain fell into, made not only the company he was with, but thoſe who ſat near enough to hear him, a good deal of diverſion.

Nothing of moment happening either here, or at mr. Goodman's, where they all ſupped together, it would be needleſs to repeat any particulars of their converſation; what has been ſaid already of their different ſentiments and behaviour, may be a ſufficient ſample of the whole.

CHAP.

CHAP. XVIII.

Treats on no freſh matters, but ſerves to heighten thoſe already mentioned.

MR. Goodman had ſtayed abroad 'till very late that night the concert had been performed, ſo was not a witneſs of any thing that had paſſed after the company came home; but on lady Mellaſin's repeating to him every thing ſhe remembered, was very well pleaſed to hear that ſhe had reconciled the captain to him, though extremely ſorry, that the blunt ill-judged affection of that gentleman had expoſed him to the ridicule, not only of miſs Betſy, but alſo of all her followers.

That young lady, in the mean time, was far from having any commiſeration for the anxieties of thoſe who loved her; —on the contrary, ſhe triumphed in the pains ſhe gave, if it can be ſuppoſed that ſhe, who was altogether ignorant of them in herſelf, could look upon them as ſincere in others: —but I am apt to believe ladies of this caſt, regard all the profeſſions of love made to them (as indeed many of them are) only as words of courſe,

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— the prerogative of youth and beauty in the one ſex, and a duty incumbent on the other to pay; — they value themſelves on the number and quality of their lovers, as they do upon the number and richneſs of their clothes, becauſe it makes them of conſideration in the world, and never take the trouble of reflecting how dear it may ſometimes coſt thoſe to whom they are indebted for indulging this vanity.

That this, at leaſt, was the motive which induced miſs Betſy to treat her lovers in the manner ſhe did, is evident to a demonſtration, from every other action of her life: — ſhe had a certain ſoftneſs in her diſpoſition, which rendered her incapable of knowing the diſtreſs of any one, without affording all the relief was in her power to give, and had ſhe ſooner been convinced of the reality of the woes of love, ſhe ſooner had left off the ambition of inflicting them, and perhaps have been brought to regard thoſe who laboured under them, rather with too much than too little compaſſion; — but of this the reader will be able to judge on proceeding farther in this hiſtory.

There were now three gentlemen who all of them addreſſed this young lady on the moſt honourable terms, yet did her giddy

giddy mind make no diſtinction between the ſerious paſſion they had for her, and the idle gallantries ſhe received from thoſe who either had no deſign in making them, or ſuch as tended to her undoing.

Impatient to hear in what faſhion mr. Trueworth would declare himſelf, and imagining he would come the next day, as he had made ſo handſome an apology for not having waited on her the preceding one, ſhe told mr. Staple and captain Hyſom, in order to prevent their coming, that ſhe was engaged to paſs that whole afternoon, and evening, with ſome ladies of her acquaintance: neither the captain nor mr. Staple ſuſpected the truth of what ſhe ſaid, but the former was in too much haſte to know ſome iſſue of his fate to be quite contented with this delay.

Miſs Betſy was not deceived in her expectations; — ſoon after dinner was over, ſhe was told mr. Trueworth had ſent to know if ſhe was at home, and beg leave to wait upon her. — Lady Mellaſin having a great deal of company that day in the dining-room, ſhe went into an adjacent one to receive him; — he was charmed at finding her alone, a happineſs he could not flatter himſelf with, on entering the houſe, as he was aſſured by the number

of footmen that he ſaw in the hall, that many viſitants were there before him: — this unexpected piece of good fortune, as he then thought it, eſpecially as he found her playing with the ſquirrel he had ſent to her the day before, ſo much elated him, that it brightened his whole aſpect, and gave a double ſhare of vivacity to his eyes, "May I hope your pardon, madam," ſaid he, "for preſuming to approach you "with ſo trifling a preſent, as that little "creature?" — "Oh, mr. Trueworth!" anſwered ſhe, "I will not forgive you if "you ſpeak ſlightly of my ſquirrel, "though I am indebted to you for the "pleaſure he gives me. — I love him ex- "ceſſively! — you could not have made "me a more obliging preſent."

"How, madam!" cried he, "I ſhould "be miſerable, indeed, if I had nothing "in my power to offer more worthy "your acceptance than that animal. — "What think you, madam, of an adoring "and paſſionately devoted heart?

"A heart!" rejoined ſhe, "oh dear, a "heart may be a pretty thing for ought I "know to the contrary; but there is ſuch "an encloſure of fleſh and bone about it, "that it is utterly impoſſible for one to

"ſee

" ſee into it, and conſequently to know " whether one likes it or not."

" The heart, madam, in the ſenſe I " mean," ſaid he, " implies the ſoul, " which being a ſpirit and inviſible, can " only be known by its effects : — if the " whole ſervices of mine may render it " an oblation, ſuch as may obtain a gra- " cious reception from the adorable miſs " Thoughtleſs, I ſhall bleſs the hour in " which I firſt beheld her charms, as the " moſt fortunate one I ever had to boaſt " of." In ending theſe words he kiſſed her hand, with a look full of the greateſt reſpect and tenderneſs.

She then told him, the ſervices of the ſoul muſt needs be valuable, becauſe they were ſincere ; but as ſhe knew not of what nature thoſe ſervices were he intended to render her, he muſt excuſe her for not ſo readily accepting them : — on which, it is not to be doubted, but that he aſ- ſured her, they ſhould be only ſuch as were dictated by the moſt pure affection, and accompanied by the ſtricteſt honour.

He was going on with ſuch proteſta- tions as may be imagined a man ſo much enamoured would make to the object of his wiſhes, when he was interrupted by

miſs Flora, who came haſtily into the room, and told him, that her mamma hearing that he was in the houſe, expected he would not leave it without letting her have the pleaſure of ſeeing him; — that they were juſt going to tea, and that her ladyſhip intreated he would join company with thoſe friends ſhe had already with her.

Mr. Trueworth would have been glad to have found ſome plauſible pretence for not complying with this invitation, but as he could not make any, that would not be looked on as ſavouring of ill manners, and miſs Betſy inſiſting on his going, they all went together into the dining-room.

The lover had now no farther opportunity of proſecuting his ſuit in this viſit; but he made another the next day, more early than before, and found no-body but mr. Goodman with miſs Betſy, lady Mellaſin and miſs Flora being gone among the ſhops, either to buy ſomething they wanted, or to tumble over goods, as they frequently did, meerly for the ſake of ſeeing new faſhions. — Mr. Trueworth having never been ſeen by mr. Goodman, miſs Betſy preſented him to him with theſe words, "Sir, this is a gentleman "from Oxford, — an intimate friend of "brother

" brother Frank's, and who did me the " favour to bring me a letter from him." There needed no more to make mr. Goodman know, both who he was and the buſineſs on which he came: — he received him with a great deal of good manners; but knowing his abſence would be moſt agreeable, after ſome few compliments, pretended he was called abroad by urgent buſineſs, and took his leave.

How much it rejoiced the ſincerely devoted heart of mr. Trueworth, to find himſelf once more alone with the idol of his wiſhes, may eaſily be conceived by thoſe who have had any experience of the paſſion he ſo deeply felt; — but his felicity was of a ſhort continuance, and he profited but little by the complaiſance of mr. Goodman.

He was but juſt beginning to pour forth ſome part of thoſe tender ſentiments, with which his ſoul overflowed, when he was prevented from proceeding, by a ſecond interruption, much more diſagreeable than the former had been.

Mr. Staple, and captain Hyſom, for whom miſs Betſy had not left the ſame orders ſhe had done the day before, came both to viſit her: the former had the ad-

vantage in being there ſomewhat ſooner than the other, and accoſted her with an air, which made the enamoured heart of mr. Trueworth immediately beat an alarm to jealouſy. Mr. Staple, who had ſeen him there once before, when he brought her brother's letter to her, did not preſently know him for his rival, nor imagined he had any other intent in his viſits, than to pay his compliments to the ſiſter of his friend.

They were all three engaged in a converſation, which had nothing particular in it, when miſs Betſy was told captain Hyſom deſired to ſpeak with her; on which ſhe bid the fellow deſire him to walk in. "He is in the back parlour, madam," replied he;—I told him you had com-"pany, ſo he deſires you will come to "him there; for he ſays he has great "buſineſs with you, and muſt needs ſpeak "with you." Both miſs Betſy and mr. Staple laughed immoderately at this meſſage; but mr. Trueworth, who was not in the ſecret, looked a little grave, as not knowing what to think of it. "You "would ſcarce believe, ſir," ſaid mr. Staple to him, "that this embaſſy came "from the court of cupid, yet I aſſure "you the captain is one of this lady's "moſt paſſionate admirers."—"Yes, in-"deed,

" deed," added miſs Betſy, " and threat-
" ens terrible things to every one, who
" ſhould dare to diſpute the conqueſt of
" my heart with him; — but go," con-
tinued ſhe, to the footman, " tell him, I
" have friends with me whom I cannot
" be ſo rude to leave, and that I inſiſt on
" his giving us his company in this
" room."

The captain on this was prevailed upon to come in, though not very well pleaſed at finding himſelf obliged to do ſo, by the poſitive commands of his miſtreſs. — He paid his reſpects, however, in his blunt manner to the gentlemen, as well as miſs Betſy, and having drawn his chair as near her as he could, " I hoped, madam," ſaid he, " you would have found an opportu-
" nity of ſpeaking to me before now:
" — you muſt needs think I am a little
" uneaſy till I know what I have to de-
" pend upon." — " Bleſs me, ſir," cried ſhe, " you talk in an odd manner!" — and then, continued ſhe, pointing to mr. True-worth, " this gentleman here, who is a
" friend of my brother's, will think I
" have out-run my income, and that you
" come to dun me for money borrowed
" of you." — " No, no," anſwered he,
" as to that you owe me nothing but
" good-will, — and that I think I deſerve
" for

" for the reſpect I have for you, if it " were for nothing elſe; — but, madam, " I ſhould be glad to know ſome anſwer " to the buſineſs I wrote to you upon." " — Lord, ſir!" replied ſhe, " I have " not yet had time to think upon it, — " much leſs to reſolve on any thing." — " That is ſtrange," reſumed he, " why " you have had three days, and ſure that " is long enough to think and reſolve too, " on any thing. — " Not for me indeed, " captain, anſwered ſhe, laughing; — but " come, here are juſt four of us, — what " think you, gentlemen, of a game of " quadrille to kill time?"

Mr. Trueworth and mr. Staple told her at once, that they approved the motion, and ſhe was juſt going to call for the cards and fiſhes, when the captain ſtopped her, ſaying, " I never loved play in my " life, and have no time to kill as may- " hap theſe gentlemen have, who, 'tis " likely have nothing elſe to do than to " dreſs and viſit; — I have a great deal " of buſineſs upon my hands, — the ſhip " is taking in her lading, and I do not " know but we may ſail in ſix or ſeven " weeks, ſo muſt deſire you would fix a " a day for us to be alone together, that " I may know at once what it is you de- " ſign to do." — " Fye, captain!" re-

plied

plied ſhe, "how can you think of ſuch a "thing? — I aſſure you, ſir," added ſhe, with an affected diſdain, "I never make "appointments with gentlemen."

"That I believe," ſaid he, "but you "ſhould conſider that I live a great way "off; — 'tis a long walk from Mile-end "to St. James's, and I hate your jolting "hackney-coaches; — beſides I may come "and come again, and never be able to "get a word with you in private, in an "afternoon, and all the morning I am "engaged either at the India-Houſe, or "at 'Change; — therefore I ſhould think "it is better for both of us not to ſtand "ſhilly, ſhally; but come to the point at "once; for lookye, fair lady, if we hap-"pen to agree, there will be little enough "time to ſettle every thing, as I am ob-"liged to go ſo ſoon." — "Too little "in my opinion, ſir," anſwered ſhe, "therefore I think it is beſt to defer talk-"ing any more of the matter, 'till you "come back."

"Come back," cried he, "why do "you conſider I ſhall be gone three "years." — "Really, ſir," ſaid ſhe, "as "I told you before I have never conſidered "any thing about it, nor can promiſe I "ſhould be able to ſay any more to you

"at

" at the end of twice the time you men-
" tion, than I can do at preſent, which I
" aſſure you is juſt nothing at all."

Though both mr. Trueworth, and mr. Staple, had too much good manners to do any thing that might affront the captain, yet neither of them could reſtrain their laughter ſo well as to prevent ſome marks of the inclination they had for it, from being viſible in their faces; — and willing to contribute ſomething on their parts to the diverſion they perceived ſhe gave herſelf, with a lover ſo every way unſuitable to her, — one told her, it was a great pity ſhe did not conſult the captain's convenience; — the other ſaid, that it muſt needs be a vaſt fatigue for a gentleman, who was accuſtomed only to walk the quarter deck, to take a ſtretch of four miles at once; — " And all to no purpoſe," cried he, that had ſpoken firſt, " pray, madam, " give him his diſpatch."

As little acquainted as the captain was with raillery, he had underſtanding enough to make him ſee, that miſs Betſy's behaviour to him had rendered him the jeſt of all the company that viſited her, and this he took ſo ill, that all the liking he before had to her was now turned into contempt. — Finding they were going on in the ironical

nical way they had began,—"Lookye, gen-
"tlemen," ſaid he, with a pretty ſtern countenance, "I would adviſe you to
"meddle only with ſuch things as con-
"cern yourſelves; — you have nothing
"to do with me, nor I with you. — If
"your errand here be as I ſuſpect it is,
"there ſits one who I dare anſwer will
"find you employment enough, as long
"as you ſhall think it worth your while to
"dance attendance. As for you, Madam," continued he, turning to miſs Betſy,
"I think it would have become you as
"well, to have given me a more civil
"anſwer, — if you did not approve of
"my propoſals, you might have told me
"ſo at firſt; — but I ſhall trouble neither
"you nor myſelf any farther about the
"matter. — I ſee how it is well enough,
"and when next I ſteer for the coaſt of
"matrimony, ſhall take care to look out
"for a port not cumbered with rubbiſh;
"— ſo your ſervant."

As he was going out of the houſe, he met lady Mellaſin and miſs Flora juſt entering, being returned from the ramble above-mentioned: — they ſaw he was very angry, and would fain have perſwaded him to turn back, telling him, that if any miſunderſtanding had happened between him and miſs Betſy, they would endeavour

deavour to make it up, and reconcile them. — To which he replied, that he thanked them for their love, but he had done with miſs Betſy for good and all; — that ſhe was no better than a young flirt, and did not know how to uſe a gentleman handſomely; — ſaid, he ſhould be glad to take a bowl of punch with mr. Goodman before he went on his voyage; but would not come any more to his houſe to be ſcoffed at by miſs Betſy, and thoſe that came after her.

Miſs Flora told him, that it was unjuſt in him to deprive her mamma, and herſelf, of the pleaſure of his good company for the fault of miſs Betſy, who, ſhe ſaid, ſhe could not help owning was of a very giddy temper. — Lady Mellaſin, to what her daughter had ſaid, added many obliging things, in order to prevail on him, either to return, or renew his viſits hereafter; but the captain was obſtinate, and perſiſting in his reſolution of coming there no more, took his leave, and miſs Flora loſt all hope of receiving any benefit from his being rejected by miſs Betſy.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIX.

Will make the reader little the wiſer.

THE greateſt part of the time, that mr. Trueworth and mr. Staple ſtayed with miſs Betſy, was taken up with talking of captain Hyſom; — his paſſion, — his behaviour, and the manner in which he received his diſmiſſion, afforded indeed an ample field for converſation: — lady Mellaſin, and miſs Flora, relating the anſwers he had given them, on their preſſing him to come back, mr. Trueworth ſaid, that it muſt be owned, that he had ſhewn a ſtrength of reſolution, which few men in love could boaſt of.

"Love, ſir, according to my notions "of that paſſion," replied mr. Staple, "is not to be felt by every heart; — "many deceive themſelves in this point, "and take for it what is in reality no "more than a bare liking of a beautiful "object: — the captain ſeems to me to "have a ſoul, as well as form, caſt "in too rough a mould, to be capable "of thoſe refined and delicate ideas,

"which

" which alone conſtitute and are worthy " to be called love."

" Yet," ſaid lady Mellaſin, " I have " heard mr. Goodman give him an ex- " cellent character, and above all that he " is one of the beſt-natured men breath- " ing." — " That may be indeed, ma- " dam," reſumed mr. Staple, " and ſome " allowances ought to be made for the " manner in which he has been bred; " though," added he, " I have known " many commanders, not only of India- " men, but of other trading veſſels, who " have all their life time uſed the ſeas, " yet have known how to behave with " politeneſs enough when on ſhore."

Mr. Trueworth agreed with mr. Staple, that though the amorous declaration of a perſon of the captain's age, and faſhion of bringing up, to one of miſs Betſy's, expoſed him to the deſerved ridicule of as many as knew it; yet ought not his particular foible to be any reflection on his occupation, which merited to be held in the greateſt veneration, as the ſtrength and opulence of the nation was owing to its commerce in foreign parts.

This was highly obliging to mr. Staple, whoſe father had been a merchant, and mr.

mr. Trueworth being the firſt who took his leave, perceiving the other ſtayed ſupper, he ſaid abundance of handſome things in his praiſe, and ſeemed to have conceived ſo high an eſteem of him, that miſs Betſy was diverted in her mind to think how he would change his way of ſpeaking, when once the ſecret of his rivalſhip ſhould come out, as ſhe knew it could not fail to do in a ſhort time.

But as eaſy as mr. Staple was at preſent, on this occaſion, mr. Trueworth was no leſs anxious and perplexed: — he was convinced that the other viſited miſs Betſy on no other ſcore than that of love, and it appeared to him equally certain, by the freedom with which he ſaw him treated in the family, that he was likewiſe greatly encouraged, if not by miſs Betſy herſelf, at leaſt by her guardian.

His thoughts were now wholly taken up with the means, by which he might gain the advantage over a rival, whom he looked upon as a formidable one, not only for his perſonal accompliſhments, but alſo for his having the good fortune to addreſs her before himſelf. — All he could do was to prevent, as much as poſſible, all opportunities of his entertaining miſs Betſy in private, till the arrival of Mr. Francis Thoughtleſs,

Thoughtleſs, from whoſe friendſhip, and the influence he had over his ſiſter, he hoped much.

He waited on her the next day very early: — mr. Goodman happening to dine that day later than ordinary, on account of ſome friends he had with him, and the cloth not being drawn, miſs Betſy went and received him in another room. — Having this favourable opportunity, he immediately began to prepare for putting into execution one of thoſe ſtratagems he had contrived for ſeparating her from mr. Staple. After ſome few tender ſpeeches, he fell into a diſcourſe concerning the weather; ſaid, he was ſorry to perceive the days ſo much ſhortened, — that ſummer would ſoon be gone; and added, that as that beautiful ſeaſon could laſt but a ſmall time, the moſt ſhould be made of it. — "I came," ſaid he, "to intreat "the favour of you, and miſs Flora, to "permit me to accompany you in an air-"ing through Brumpton, Kenſington, "Chelſea, and the other little villages on "this ſide of London."

Miſs Betſy replied, that ſhe would go with all her heart, and believed ſhe could anſwer the ſame for miſs Flora, there being only two grave Dons, and their wives within,

within, whom ſhe would be glad to be diſengaged from; — "but if not," ſaid ſhe, "I can ſend for a young lady in the "neighbourhood, who will be glad to "give us her company."

She ſent firſt, however, to miſs Flora, who immediately came in, and the propoſal being made, accepted it with pleaſure, and added, that ſhe would aſk her mamma for orders for the coach to be got ready. — "It needs not, madam," ſaid mr. Trueworth, "my ſervant is here, "and he ſhall get one from Blunt's;" — but miſs Flora inſiſted on their going in mr. Goodman's, ſaying, ſhe was certain neither he nor her mamma would go out that day, as the company they had were come to ſtay; on which mr. Trueworth complied.

When ſhe had left the room, "Ah! "madam," ſaid he to miſs Betſy, "could "I flatter myſelf with believing I owed "this condeſcenſion to any other motive "than your complaiſance, to a perſon "who has ſome ſhare in your brother's "friendſhip, I ſhould be bleſt indeed; — "but, ah! I ſee I have a rival, — a rival "dangerous to my hopes, not only on "the account of his merits, but alſo as "he had the honour of declaring his paſ-

"ſion

" ſion before me: — the fortunate mr. " Staple," added he, kiſſing her hand, " may perhaps have already made ſome " impreſſion on that heart I would ſacri- " fice my all to gain, and I am come too " late."

" Rather too ſoon," replied ſhe, ſmiling; — " both of you equally too ſoon, " admitting his ſentiments for me be as " you imagine; for I aſſure you, ſir, " my heart has hitherto been entirely my " own, and is not very likely to incline " to the reception of any gueſt of the na- " ture you mean, for yet a long — long " time. — Whoever thinks to gain me " muſt not be in a hurry, like captain " Hyſom."

Mr. Trueworth was about to make ſome paſſionate reply, when miſs Flora returned, and told them the coach would be ready immediately, for ſhe herſelf had ſpoke to the coachman, and bid him put the horſes to with all the haſte he could; on which the lover expreſſed his ſenſe of the obligation he had to her for taking this trouble, in the politeſt terms.

A perſon of much leſs diſcernment than this gentleman might eaſily perceive, that the way to be agreeable to miſs Betſy was not

not to be too ſerious; — he therefore aſſumed all the vivacity he was maſter of, both before they went, and during the whole courſe of the little tour they made, in which it is not to be doubted but he regaled them with every thing the places they paſſed through could furniſh.

The ladies were ſo well pleaſed both with their entertainment, and the company of the perſon who entertained them, that they ſeemed not in haſte to go home, and he had the double ſatisfaction of enjoying the preſence of his miſtreſs, and of giving at leaſt one day's diſappointment to his rival: — he was confirmed in the truth of this conjecture, when, on returning to mr. Goodman's, which was not till ſome hours after cloſe of day, the footman who opened the door told miſs Betſy, that mr. Staple had been to wait upon her.

After this it may be ſuppoſed he had a night of much more tranquility, than the preceding one had afforded him: — the next morning, as early as he thought decency permitted, he made a viſit to miſs Betſy, under the pretence of coming to enquire if her health had not ſuffered by being abroad in the night air, and how ſhe had reſted: — ſhe received him with

a great deal of ſprightlineſs, and replied, ſhe found herſelf ſo well after it, as to be ready for ſuch another jaunt, whenever he had a fancy for it. "I take you at "your word, madam," cried he, tranſported to hear ſhe anticipated what he came on purpoſe to intreat, — "I am "ready this moment if you pleaſe," continued he, "and we will either take a "barge, and go up the river, or a coach "to Hampſtead, or any of thoſe places, "juſt to diverſify the ſcene; — you have "only to ſay which you chuſe."

She then told him, there was a neceſſity of deferring their ramble 'till the afternoon, becauſe miſs Flora was abroad, and would not return till dinner-time. — "As "to what route we ſhall take, and every "thing belonging to it," ſaid ſhe, "I "leave it entirely to you; — I know no-"body has a more elegant taſte, or a bet-"ter judgment." — "I have taken care," replied he, "to give the world an high "opinion of me in both, by making my "addreſſes to the amiable miſs Betſy; — "but, madam," purſued he, "ſince we "are alone, will you give me leave to "tell you how I have employed my hours "this morning." — "Why, — in dreſ-"ſing, — breakfaſting, — and, perhaps, "a little reading," anſwered ſhe. — "A

"ſmall

" ſmall time, madam, ſuffices for the two
" former articles with me," reſumed he,
" but I have indeed been reading; —
" happening to dip into the works of a
" poet, who wrote near a century ago,
" I found ſome words ſo adapted to the
" ſituation of my heart, and ſo agreeable
" to the ſenſe of the anſwer I was about
" to make yeſterday to what you ſaid,
" concerning the perſeverance of a lover,
" that I could not forbear putting ſome
" notes to them, which I beg you will
" give me your opinion of.

In ſpeaking theſe words, he took a piece of paper out of his pocket, and ſung the following ſtanzas.

I.

" THE Patriarch, to gain a wife
" Chaſte, beautiful, and young,
" Serv'd fourteen years, a painful life,
" And never thought it long.

II.

" Oh! were you to reward ſuch cares,
" And life ſo long would ſtay,
" Not fourteen, but four hundred years,
" Would ſeem but as one day.

Mr. Trueworth had a fine voice, and great ſkill in muſic, having perfected himſelf in that ſcience from the beſt maſters, when he was in Italy. Miſs Betſy was ſo charmed both with the words and the notes, that ſhe made him ſing them ſeveral times over, and afterwards ſet them down in her muſic-book, to the end that ſhe might get them by heart, and join her voice in concert with her ſpinet.

Mr. Trueworth would not make his morning viſit too long, believing it might be her time to dreſs againſt dinner, as ſhe was now in ſuch a deſhabille as ladies uſually put on, on their firſt riſing; — ſo after having received a ſecond promiſe from her of giving him her company that day abroad, took his leave, highly ſatisfied with the progreſs he imagined he had made in her good graces.

The wind happening to grow a little boiſterous, though the weather otherwiſe was fair and clear, made mr. Trueworth think a land journey would be more agreeable to the ladies, than to venture themſelves upon the water; he therefore procured a handſome livery coach, and attended by his two ſervants, went to mr. Goodman's: — the ladies were already in ex-

expectation of him, and did not make him wait a moment.

Nothing extraordinary happening at this entertainment, nor at thoſe others, which, for ſeveral ſucceeding days without intermiſſion mr. Trueworth prevailed on his miſtreſs to accept, it would be ſuperfluous to trouble the reader with the particulars of them.

Mr. Staple all this time was very uneaſy; — he had not ſeen miſs Betſy for a whole week, and though he knew not as yet, that he was deprived of that ſatisfaction, by her being engroſſed by a rival, yet he now began to be ſenſible ſhe had leſs regard for him, than he had flattered himſelf he had inſpired her with; and this of itſelf was a ſufficient mortification to a young gentleman, who was not only paſſionately in love, but alſo could not, without being guilty of great injuſtice to his own merits, but think himſelf not altogether unworthy of ſucceeding. — This however was no more than a ſlight ſample of the inquietudes which the blind god ſometimes inflicts on hearts devoted to him, as will hereafter appear in the progreſs of this hiſtory.

CHAP. XX.

Contains an odd accident, which happened to miſs Betſy in the cloiſters of Weſtminſter-abbey.

MR. Trueworth, who was yet far from being acquainted with the temper of the object he adored, now thought he had no reaſon to deſpair of being one day in poſſeſſion of all he aimed to obtain; — it ſeemed certain to him, at leaſt, that he had nothing to apprehend from the pretenſions of a rival, who at firſt he had looked upon as ſo formidable, and no other at preſent interpoſed between him and his deſigns.

Miſs Betſy, in the mean time, wholly regardleſs of who hoped, or who deſpaired, had no aim in any thing ſhe did, but meerly to divert herſelf, and to that end laid hold of every opportunity that offered. Mr. Goodman having caſually mentioned, as they were at ſupper, that one mr. Soulguard had juſt taken orders, and was to preach his firſt ſermon at Weſtminſter-abbey the next day, ſhe preſently had a curioſity of hearing how he would behave

behave in the pulpit; — his over modeſt, and, as they termed it, ſheepiſh behaviour in company, having, as often as he came there, afforded matter of ridicule to her and miſs Flora. — Theſe two young ladies therefore talking on it after they were in bed, agreed to go to the cathedral, not doubting but they ſhould have enough to laugh at, and report to all thoſe of their acquaintance who had ever ſeen him.

What meer trifles, — what airy nothings ſerve to amuſe a mind not taken up with more eſſential matters? — Miſs Betſy was ſo full of the diverſion ſhe ſhould have in hearing the down-looked baſhful mr. Soulguard harangue his congregation, that ſhe could think and talk of nothing elſe, till the hour arrived when ſhe ſhould go to experience what ſhe had ſo pleaſant an idea of.

Miſs Flora, who had till now ſeemed as eager as herſelf, cried all at once, that her head ached, and that ſhe did not care for ſtirring out: — miſs Betſy, who would fain have laughed her out of it, told her, ſhe had only got the vapours, — that the parſon would cure her, — and ſuch like things, — but the other was not to be prevailed upon by all miſs Betſy, or even lady Mellaſin herſelf, could ſay, and anſwered,

ſwered, with ſome ſullenneſs, that poſitively ſhe would not go. — Miſs Betſy was highly ruffled at this ſudden turn of her temper, as it was now too late to ſend for any other young lady of her acquaintance to go with her; — reſolving, nevertheleſs, not to baulk her humour, ſhe ordered a chair to be called, and went alone.

Neither the young parſon's manner of preaching, nor the text he choſe, being any way material to this hiſtory, I ſhall therefore paſs over the time of divine ſervice, and only ſay, that after it was ended miſs Betſy paſſing towards the weſt-gate, and ſtopping to look on the fine tomb, erected to the memory of mr. ſecretary Craggs, was accoſted by mr. Bloomacre, a young gentleman who ſometimes viſited lady Mellaſin, and lived at Weſtminſter, in which place he had a large eſtate.

He had with him, when he came up to her, two gentlemen of his acquaintance, but who were entire ſtrangers to miſs Betſy: — "What," ſaid he, "the cele-
"brated miſs Betſy Thoughtleſs! — miſs
"Betſy Thoughtleſs! the idol of man-
"kind! alone, unattended by any of her
"train of admirers, and contemplating
"theſe memento's of mortality!" — "To
"compliment my underſtanding," replied ſhe,

ſhe, gaily, "you ſhould rather have told "me I was contemplating the memento's "of great actions." — "You are at the "wrong end of the cathedral for that, "madam," reſumed he, "and I don't "remember to have heard any thing ex- "traordinary of the life of this great "man, whoſe effigy makes ſo fine a fi- "gure here, except the favours he re- "ceived from the ladies."

"'Twere too much then to beſtow "them on him both alive and dead," cried ſhe, "therefore we'll paſs on to "ſome other."

Mr. Bloomacre had a great deal of wit and vivacity, nor were his two companions deficient in either of theſe qualities; ſo that between the three miſs Betſy was very agreeably entertained: — they went round from tomb and tomb, and the real characters, as well as epitaphs, ſome of which are flattering enough, afforded a variety of obſervations. — In fine, the converſation was ſo pleaſing to miſs Betſy, that ſhe never thought of going home, 'till it grew too dark to examine either the ſculpture, or the inſcriptions; ſo inſenſibly does time glide on, when accompanied with ſatisfaction.

But now enſued a mortification, which ſtruck a damp on the ſprightlineſs of this young lady: — ſhe had ſent away the chair which brought her, not doubting but that there would be others about the church doors. She knew not how difficult it was to procure ſuch a vehicle in Weſtminſter, eſpecially on a Sunday; — to add to her vexation, it rained very much, and ſhe was not in a habit fit to travel on foot in any weather, much leſs in ſuch as this.

They went down into the cloiſters, in order to find ſome perſon whom they might ſend, either for a coach or chair, for the gentlemen would have been glad of ſuch conveniencies for themſelves, as well as miſs Betſy: — they walked round and round ſeveral times, without hearing or ſeeing any body; — but at laſt a fellow, who uſed to be employed in ſweeping the church doors, offered his ſervice to procure them what they wanted, in caſe there was a poſſibility of doing it; — they promiſed to gratify him well for his pains, and he ran with all the ſpeed he could to do as he had ſaid.

The rain and wind increaſed to ſuch a prodigious height, that ſcarce was ever a more

more tempeſtuous evening. — Almoſt a whole hour was elapſed, and the man not come back, ſo that they had reaſon to fear neither coach nor chair was to be got. — Miſs Betſy began to grow extremely impatient; — the gentlemen endeavoured all they could to keep her in good humour, — "We have a good ſtone roof "over our heads, madam," ſaid one of them, "and that at preſent ſhelters us "from the inclemency of the elements;" "— beſides," cried another, "the ſtorm "cannot laſt always, — and when it is "a little abated, — here are three of us, "— we will take you in our arms by "turns, and carry you home." — All this would not make miſs Betſy laugh, and ſhe was in the utmoſt agitation of mind to think what ſhe ſhould do, when, on a ſudden, a door in that part of the cloiſter which leads to Little Dean's Yard was opened, and a very young lady, not exceeding eleven years of age, but very richly habited, came running out, and taking miſs Betſy by the ſleeve, "Ma-"dam," ſaid ſhe, "I beg to ſpeak with "you." — Miſs Betſy was ſurpriſed, but ſtepping ſome paces from the gentlemen to hear what ſhe had to ſay, the other drawing towards the door, cried, "Pleaſe, "madam, to come in here;" on which ſhe followed, and the gentlemen ſtood about

ſome four or five yards diſtant. — Miſs Betſy had no ſooner reached the threſhold, which had a ſtep down into the hall, than the young lady took hold of her hand, and pulling her gently down, as if to communicate what ſhe had to ſay with the more privacy, a footman, who ſtood behind the door, immediately clapped it to, and put the chain acroſs, as if he apprehended ſome violence might be offered to it. — Miſs Betſy was in ſo much conſternation, that ſhe was unable to ſpeak one word, 'till the young lady, who ſtill had hold of her hand, ſaid to her, "You "may thank heaven, madam, that our "family happened to be in town, — elſe "I do not know what miſchief might "have befallen you." — "Bleſs me," cried miſs Betſy, and was going on, but the other interrupted her, ſaying, haſtily, as ſhe led her forward, "Walk this way, "— my brother will tell you all." — Miſs Betſy then ſtopped ſhort, "What "means all this? ſaid ſhe: where am I "pray, miſs? who is your brother?" To which the other replied, that her brother was the lord viſcount ———, and that he at preſent was the owner of that houſe.

The ſurprize miſs Betſy had been put in by this young lady's firſt accoſting her, was

was not at all diſſipated by theſe words, but had now an equal portion of curioſity added to it; — ſhe longed to know the meaning of words, which at preſent ſeemed ſo myſterious to her, and with what kind of miſchief ſhe had been threatened, that ſhe readily accompanied her young conductreſs into a magnificent parlour, at the upper end of which ſat the nobleman ſhe had been told of, — "I am extremely "happy," ſaid he, as ſoon as he ſaw her enter, "that providence has put it in "my power to reſcue ſo fine a lady from "the villainy contrived againſt her."

Miſs Betſy replied, that ſhe ſhould always be thankful for any favours conferred upon her, but deſired to know of what nature they were, for which ſhe was indebted to his lordſhip: — he then told her, that the perſons ſhe had been with had the moſt baſe deſigns upon her; — that he had heard, from a cloſet window where he was ſitting, two of them lay the plot for carrying her off in a hackney coach; and added, that being ſtruck with horror at the foul intention, he had contrived, by the means of his ſiſter, to get her out of their power; — "For," ſaid he, "I know "one of them to be ſo bloody a villain, "that had I gone out myſelf, I muſt have "fallen a ſacrifice to their reſentment."

Miſs

Miſs Betſy was quite confounded; ſhe knew not how to queſtion the veracity of a nobleman, who could have no view or intereſt to deceive her, yet it was equally incongruous to her, that mr. Bloomacre could harbour any deſigns upon her of that ſort his lordſhip mentioned: — ſhe had ſeveral times been in company with that gentleman, and he had never behaved towards her in a manner which could give her room to ſuſpect he had any diſhonourable intentions towards her; — but then, the treatment ſhe had received from the gentleman-commoner at Oxford reminded her, that men of an amorous complexion want only an opportunity to ſhew thoſe inclinations which indolence, or perhaps indelicacy, prevents them from attempting to gratify by aſſiduities, and courtſhip.

After having taken ſome little time to conſider what ſhe ſhould ſay, ſhe replied, that ſhe was infinitely obliged to his lordſhip for the care he took of her, but might be very well amazed to hear thoſe gentlemen had any ill deſigns upon her, two of whom were perfect ſtrangers to her, and the other often viſited at the houſe where ſhe was boarded. As for the ſending for a coach, ſhe ſaid it was by

by her own deſire, if no chair could be procured; and added, that if his lordſhip had no other reaſon to apprehend any ill was meant to her, ſhe could not, without injuſtice, forbear to clear up the miſtake.

Lord ——— was a little confounded at theſe words, but ſoon recovering himſelf, told her, that ſhe knew not the real character of the perſons ſhe had been with; — that Bloomacre was one of the greateſt libertines in the world; — that though ſhe might agree to have a coach ſent for, ſhe could not be ſure to what place it might carry her, and that he heard two of them, while the third was entertaining her, ſpeak to each other in a manner which convinced him the moſt villainous contrivance was about to be practiſed on her.

A loud knocking at the door now interrupted their diſcourſe; — both his lordſhip and his ſiſter ſeemed terribly alarmed, — all the ſervants were called, and charge given not to open the door upon any account, — to bar up the lower windows, and to give anſwers from thoſe above, to whoever was there. — The knocking continued with greater violence than it began, and miſs Betſy heard the gentlemen's voices talking to the ſervants, and though ſhe

ſhe could not diſtinguiſh what they ſaid, found there were very high words between them.—My lord's ſiſter ran into the hall to liſten, then came back, crying, "O what "terrible oaths! — I am afraid they will "break open the door." — "No," replied lord ———, "it is too ſtrong for "that; — but I wiſh we had been ſo "wiſe as to ſend for a conſtable."—One of the ſervants came down, and repeated what their young lady had ſaid; adding, that the gentlemen ſwore they would not leave the place, till they had ſpoke with the lady, who they ſaid had been trepanned into that houſe: — on this, "Sup-"poſe, my lord," ſaid miſs Betſy, "I "go to the door, and tell them, that I "will not go with them." — "No, ma-"dam," anſwered lord ———, "I "cannot conſent my door ſhall be "opened to ſuch ruffians; for, beſides "that they would certainly ſeize, and "carry you off by force, I know not "what miſchief they might do my poor "men, for having at firſt refuſed them "entrance." — She then ſaid, ſhe would go up to the window, and anſwer them from thence; but he would not ſuffer her to be ſeen by them at all, and to keep her from inſiſting on it, told her a great many ſtories of rapes, and other miſchiefs had been

been perpetrated by Bloomacre, and thoſe he kept company with.

All this did not give miſs Betſy thoſe terrors, which it is very plain his lordſhip and ſiſter endeavoured to inſpire her with, yet would ſhe ſay no more of appearing to the gentlemen, as ſhe found he was ſo averſe to it.

At length the knocking ceaſed, and one of the footmen came down, and ſaid, that thoſe who had given his lordſhip this diſturbance had withdrawn from the door, and he believed were gone quite out of the cloiſters; — but this intelligence did not ſatisfy lord ———; he either was, or pretended to be, in fear, that they were ſtill ſkulking in ſome corner, and would ruſh in if they once ſaw the door opened. — There was ſtill the ſame difficulty as ever, how miſs Betſy ſhould get home; — that is, how ſhe ſhould get ſafely out of the houſe, for the rain being over, the ſervants ſaid they did not doubt but they ſhould be able to procure a chair or coach: — after much debating on this matter, it was thus contrived.

Lord ——— had a window that looked into the yard of one of the prebendary's, — a footman was to go out of this window

dow to the back door of that reverend divine, relate the whole ſtory, and beg leave to go through his houſe: — this requeſt being granted, the footman went, and returned in leſs than half an hour, with the welcome news, that a chair was ready, and waited in College-ſtreet. — Miſs Betſy had no way of paſſing, but by the ſame the footman had done, which ſhe eaſily did, by being lifted by my lord into the window, and deſcending from it by the help of ſome ſteps, placed on the other ſide by the ſervants of the prebendary.

It would be ſuperfluous to trouble the reader with any ſpeeches made by lord ——— and his ſiſter to miſs Betſy, or the replies ſhe made to them; I ſhall only ſay, that paſſing through this houſe, and the College-garden, at the door of which the chair attended, ſhe went into it, preceded by lord ———'s footman, muffled up in a cloak, and without a flambeau, to prevent being known, in caſe ſhe ſhould be met by Bloomacre, or either of his companions; and with this equipage ſhe arrived ſafely at home, though not without a mind ſtrangely perplexed at the meaning of this adventure.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXI.

Gives an explanation of the former, with other particulars, more agreeable to the reader in the repetition, than to the perſons concerned in them.

IT was near ten o'clock when miſs Betſy came home, and mr. Goodman, who had been very uneaſy at her ſtaying out ſo late, eſpecially as ſhe was alone, was equally rejoiced at her return; but, as well as lady Mellaſin, was ſurprized on hearing by what accident ſhe had been detained: — they knew not how to judge of it, — there was no circumſtance in the whole affair, which could make them think mr. Bloomacre had any deſigns of that ſort lord ——— had ſuggeſted; yet did mr. Goodman think himſelf obliged, as the young lady's guardian, to go to that gentleman, and have ſome talk with him concerning what had paſſed. — Accordingly he went the next morning to his houſe, but not finding him at home, left word with his ſervant, that he deſired to ſpeak with him as ſoon as poſſible: — he came not, however, the whole day, nor ſent any meſſage to excuſe his not

not doing ſo, and this neglect gave mr. Goodman, and miſs Betſy herſelf, ſome room to ſuſpect, he was no leſs guilty than he had been repreſented, ſince had he been perfectly innocent, it ſeemed reaſonable to them, to think he would have come, even of his own accord, to have learned of miſs Betſy the motive of her leaving him in ſo abrupt and odd a manner; — but how much they wronged him will preſently appear, and they were afterwards convinced.

There was an implacable animoſity between lord ——— and mr. Bloomacre, on account of the former's pretending a right to ſome lands which the other held, and could not be diſpoſſeſſed of by law. — As his lordſhip knew mr. Bloomacre was not of a diſpoſition to bear an affront tamely, he had no other way to vent his ſpleen againſt him, than by villifying and traducing him in all companies he came into; but this he took care to do in ſo artful a manner as to be enabled, either to evade or render what he ſaid impoſſible to be proved, in caſe he were called to an account for it.

The affair of miſs Betſy, innocent as it was, he thought gave him an excellent opportunity of gratifying his malice; — he

he went early the next morning to the dean, complained of an inſult offered to his houſe by mr. Bloomacre, on the ſcore of his ſiſter having brought in a young lady, whom that gentleman had detained in the cloiſters, and was going to carry off, by the aſſiſtance of ſome friends he had with him, in a hackney coach.

The dean, who was alſo a biſhop, was extremely incenſed, as well he might, at ſo glaring a prophanation of that ſacred place, and the moment lord ——— had taken his leave, ſent for mr. Bloomacre to come to him. — That gentleman immediately obeying the ſummons, the biſhop began to reprimand him in terms, which the occaſion ſeemed to require from a perſon of his function and authority: — mr. Bloomacre could not forbear interrupting him, though with the greateſt reſpect, ſaying nothing could be more falſe and baſe, than ſuch an accuſation; — that whoever had given ſuch an information was a villain, and merited to be uſed as ſuch. — The Prelate ſeeing him in this heat, would not mention the name of his accuſer; but replyed coolly, that it was poſſible he might be wronged, but to convince him that he was ſo, he muſt relate to him the whole truth of the ſtory, and on what grounds a conjecture ſo much to

the

the diſadvantage of his reputation had been formed: — on which mr. Bloomacre repeated every thing that had paſſed; and added, that he was well acquainted with the family where the young lady was boarded, and that he was certain ſhe would appear in perſon to juſtify him in this point, if his lordſhip thought it proper; — "but," ſaid the biſhop, "I hear "you affronted the lord ———, by "thundering at his door, and abuſing his "ſervants." — "No, my lord," anſwered mr. Bloomacre, "lord ———, though "far from being my friend, will not dare "to alledge any ſuch thing againſt me. "— We were indeed a little ſurprized to "ſee the young lady, who was with us, "ſnatched away in ſo odd a faſhion by "his ſiſter, who we eaſily perceived had "not the leaſt acquaintance with her. "— We continued walking, however, in "the cloiſter, till the man whom we "had ſent for a coach returned, and "told us, he had got one, and that it "waited at the gate. — We then, in-"deed, knocked at lord ———'s door, "and being anſwered from the windows "by the ſervants, in a very impertinent "manner, I believe we might utter ſome "words not very reſpectful, either of his "lordſhip or his ſiſter, whoſe behaviour

"in

" in this affair I am as yet intirely ig-
" norant how to account for."

The biſhop pauſed a conſiderable time, but on mr. Bloomacre's repeating what he had ſaid before, concerning bringing the lady herſelf to avouch the truth of what he had related to his lordſhip, replyed, that there was no occaſion for troubling either her or himſelf any farther; — that he believed there had been ſome miſtake in the buſineſs, and that he ſhould think no more of it; on which mr. Bloomacre took his leave.

Though the biſhop had not mentioned the name of lord ——— to mr. Bloomacre, as the perſon who had brought this complaint againſt him, yet he was very certain, by all circumſtances, that he could be indebted to no other for ſuch a piece of low malice; and this, joined to ſome other provocations he had received from the ill-will of that nobleman, made him reſolve to do himſelf juſtice.

He went directly from the deanery in ſearch of the two gentlemen, who had been with him in the abbey when he happened to meet miſs Betſy, and having found them both, they went to a tavern together, in order to conſult on what was proper

proper to be done, for the chaſtiſement of lord ———'s folly and ill nature.

Both of them agreed with mr. Bloomacre, that he ought to demand that ſatisfaction, which every gentleman has a right to expect from any one who has injured him, of what degree ſoever he be, excepting thoſe of royal blood. — Each of them was ſo eager to be his ſecond in this affair, that they were obliged to draw lots for the determination of the choice; — he who had the ill-luck, as he called it, to draw the ſhorteſt cut, would needs oblige them to let him be the bearer of the challenge, that he might at leaſt have ſome ſhare in inflicting the puniſhment, which the behaviour of that unworthy lord ſo juſtly merited.

The challenge was wrote, — the place appointed for meeting was the field behind Montague houſe; but the gentleman who carried it brought no anſwer back, — his lordſhip telling him only that he would conſider on the matter, and let mr. Bloomacre know his intentions.

Mr. Bloomacre as the principal, and the other as his ſecond, were ſo enraged at this, that the latter reſolved to go himſelf, and force a more categorical anſwer. — He

—He did ſo, and lord ——— having had time to conſult his brother, and, as it is ſaid, ſome other friends, told him, he accepted the challenge, and would be ready with his ſecond at the time and place appointed in it.

Mr. Bloomacre did not go home that whole day, therefore knew nothing of the meſſage had been left for him by mr. Goodman, till it was too late to comply with it; but this ſeeming remiſſneſs in him, was not all that troubled the mind of that open and honeſt-hearted guardian of miſs Betſy. — Mr. Trueworth and mr. Staple had both been at his houſe the day before: — the former on hearing his miſtreſs was abroad, left only his compliments, and went away, though very much preſſed to come in by miſs Flora, who ſeeing him through the parlour-window, ran to the door herſelf, and intreated he would paſs the evening there; — mr. Staple came the moment after, and met his rival coming down the ſteps that led up to the door; — mr. Trueworth ſaluted him in paſſing with the uſual complaiſance, which the other returned in a very cool manner, and knocked haſtily at the door, "I imagine," ſaid he to the footman who opened it, "that miſs Betſy is "not at home, by that gentleman's hav-

" ing ſo early taken leave; but I would " ſpeak with mr. Goodman if he be at " leiſure."

He was then ſhewed into the back parlour, which was the room where mr. Goodman generally received thoſe perſons who came to him upon buſineſs; — on hearing who it was that aſked for him, he was a little ſurprized, and deſired he would walk up ſtairs; but mr. Staple not knowing but there might be company above, returned for anſwer, that he had no more than a word or two to ſay to him, and that muſt be in private; on which the other immediately came down to him.

This young lover having by accident been informed, not only that mr. Trueworth made his addreſſes to miſs Betſy, but alſo that it was with him ſhe had been engaged during all that time he had been deprived of ſeeing her, thought it proper to talk with mr. Goodman, concerning this new obſtacle to his wiſhes: — that worthy gentleman was extremely troubled to be queſtioned on an affair, on which he had given miſs Betſy his word not to interfere, but finding himſelf very much preſſed by a perſon whoſe paſſion he had encouraged, and who was the ſon of one

with

with whom he had lived in a long friendſhip, he frankly confeſſed to him, that mr. Trueworth was indeed recommended to miſs Betſy by her brother; — told him, he was ſorry the thing had happened ſo, but had nothing farther to do with it; — that the young lady was at her own diſpoſal, as to the article of marriage; — that he was ignorant how ſhe would determine, and that it muſt be from herſelf alone he could learn what it was he might expect or hope.

Mr. Staple received little ſatisfaction from what mr. Goodman had ſaid, but reſolved to take his advice, and, if poſſible, bring miſs Betſy to ſome eclairciſement of the fate he was to hope or fear. — Accordingly he came the next morning to viſit her: — a liberty he had never taken, nor would now, if he had not deſpaired of finding her in an afternoon.

She gave herſelf, however, no airs of reſentment on that account, but when he began to teſtify his diſcontent concerning mr. Trueworth, and the apprehenſions he had of his having gained the preference in her heart, though the laſt who had ſollicited that happineſs, ſhe replied, in the moſt haughty tone, that ſhe was ſurprized at the freedom he took with her; — that

ſhe was, and ever would be, miſtreſs of her actions and ſentiments, and no man had a right to pry into either; and concluded with ſaying, that ſhe was ſorry the civilities ſhe had treated him with, ſhould make him imagine he had a privilege of finding fault with thoſe ſhe ſhewed to others.

It is not to be doubted but that he made uſe of all the arguments in his power to convince her, that a true and perfect paſſion was never unaccompanied with jealous fears; — he acknowleged the merits of mr. Trueworth; "but," added he, "the more he is poſſeſſed of, the more "dangerous is he to my hopes; — and then begged her to conſider the torments he had ſuffered, while being ſo long deprived of her preſence, and knowing, at the ſame time, a rival was bleſſed with it.

Miſs Betſy was not at this time in a humour either to be perſwaded by the reaſons, or ſoftened by the ſubmiſſions of her lover, and poor mr. Staple, after having urged all that love, wit, deſpair, and grief could dictate, was obliged to depart more diſſatisfied than he came.

In going out, he ſaw mr. Goodman in the parlour, who gave him the good morning as he paſſed; — "A ſad one it has been "to me," anſwered he, with ſomewhat

of horror in his countenance; "but I "will not endure the rack of many ſuch. — With theſe words he flung out of the houſe, in order to go about what perhaps the reader is not at a loſs to gueſs at.

CHAP. XXII.

One duel began, and another fought in the ſame morning, on miſs Betſy's account, are here related, with the manner in which the different antagoniſts behaved to each other.

WELL may the god of love be painted blind, — thoſe devoted to his influence are ſeldom capable of ſeeing things as they truly are; — the ſmalleſt favour elates them with imaginary hopes, and the leaſt coolneſs ſinks them into deſpair; — their joys, — their griefs, — their fears more frequently ſpring from ideal than effective cauſes. — Mr. Staple judged not, that miſs Betſy refuſed to eaſe his jealous apprehenſions on the ſcore of mr. Trueworth, becauſe it was her natural temper to give pain to thoſe that loved her, but becauſe ſhe had really an affection for that gentleman; — looking on himſelf therefore as now abandoned to all hope, rage and revenge took the whole poſſeſſion of

his ſoul, and chaſed away the ſofter emotions thence.

Having heard mr. Trueworth ſay he was lodged in Pall-Mall, he went to the Cocoa-Tree, and there informing himſelf of the particular houſe where his rival might be found, ſat down, and wrote the following billet:

To Charles Trueworth, Eſq;

"*Sir*,

"BOTH our wiſhes tend to the poſ-
"ſeſſion of one beautiful object; —
"both cannot be happy in the accom-
"pliſhment; — it is fit therefore the ſword
"ſhould decide the difference between us,
"and put an end to thoſe pretenſions on
"the one ſide or the other, which it is
"not probable either of us will other-
"wiſe recede from. — In confidence of
"your complying with this propoſal, I
"ſhall attend you in the Green-Park,
"between the hours of ſeven and eight
"tomorrow morning; — as the affair
"concerns only ourſelves, I think it both
"needleſs and unjuſt to engage any of
"our friends in it, ſo ſhall come alone, and
"expect you will do the ſame to, ſir,

"Your humble ſervant,

"T. Staple."

Mr.

Mr. Trueworth was at home, and, on receiving this, immediately, and without the leaſt heſitation, wrote, and ſent back by the ſame meſſenger, the following anſwer:

To T. STAPLE, Eſq;

" *Sir*,

" THOUGH I cannot but think the " deciſion of our fate ought to be " left entirely to the lady herſelf, to whom, " whatever be the fortune of the ſword, it " muſt at laſt be referred; yet as I can- " not, without being guilty of injuſtice " to my own honour and pretenſions, re- " fuſe you the ſatisfaction you require, " ſhall not fail to meet you at the time " and place mentioned in yours, till " when, I am, ſir,

" Your humble ſervant,

" C. TRUEWORTH."

By the ſtile of this letter it may be eaſily perceived, that mr. Trueworth was not very well pleaſed with this combat, though the greatneſs of his courage and ſpirit would not permit him to harbour the leaſt thought of avoiding it; yet whatever his thoughts were on this occaſion, he viſited miſs Betſy the ſame day, and diſcovered no part of them in his countenance, — his behaviour, on the contrary,

was rather more ſprightly than uſual; — he propoſed to the two young ladies to go on ſome party of pleaſure: — miſs Betſy anſwered, with her accuſtomed freedom, that ſhe ſhould like it very well; but miſs Flora, who had been for three or four days paſt very ſullen and ill-humoured, ſaid one minute ſhe would go, and the next that ſhe would not, and gave herſelf ſuch odd and capricious airs, that miſs Betſy told her, ſhe believed her head was turned; to which the other replied, tartly, that if the diſtemper was catching, it would be no wonder ſhe ſhould be infected, having it always ſo near her. — Miſs Betſy replied, that ſhe knew no greater proof of madneſs, than to puniſh one's ſelf in the hope of mortifying another; — "but that ſhall never be my "caſe," continued ſhe, "as you will "find." — Then turning to mr. Trueworth, "if you will accept of my com-"pany, without miſs Flora," ſaid ſhe, laughing, "we will take a walk into the "park." — It is not to be doubted, but that the lover gladly embraced this opportunity of having his miſtreſs to himſelf. — "'Tis like miſs Betſy Thought-"leſs," cried miſs Flora, "and only "like herſelf, to go abroad with a man "alone." — Miſs Betſy regarded not this reproach, but catching up her fan and gloves,

gloves, gave mr. Trueworth her hand to lead her where ſhe had propoſed, leaving the other ſo full of ſpite, that the tears guſhed from her eyes.

'Tis likely the reader will be pretty much ſurpriſed, that miſs Flora, who had always ſeemed more ready than even miſs Betſy herſelf, to accept of invitations of the ſort mr. Trueworth had made, ſhould now all at once become ſo averſe; but his curioſity for an explanation of this matter muſt be for a while poſtponed, others, for which he may be equally impatient, requiring to be firſt diſcuſſed.

Two duels having been agreed upon to be fought on the ſame morning, the reſpect due to the quality of lord ———, demands we ſhould give that wherein he was concerned the preference in the repetition.

The hour appointed being arrived, lord ——— and his brother came into the field, — mr. Bloomacre and his friend appeared immediately after. — "You are "the perſons," ſaid lord ———, in an exulting tone, "who made the invitation, "but we are the firſt at table." —"'Tis "not yet paſt the time," replied Bloomacre, looking on his watch, but the later we come the more eagerly we ſhall fall to. — In that inſtant all their ſwords

were drawn; but they had ſcarce time to exchange one thruſt before a poſſe of conſtables, with their aſſiſtants, armed with ſtaves and clubs, ruſhed in between them, beat down their weapons, and carried them all four to the houſe of the high-bailiff of Weſtminſter.

That gentleman, by virtue of his office, made a ſtrict examination into what had paſſed, and having heard what both parties had to ſay, ſeverely reprimanded the one for having given the provocation, and the other for the manner in which it was reſented; — he told them, he had a right, in order to preſerve the peace of Weſtminſter, and the liberties of it, to demand, that they ſhould find ſureties for their future behaviour, but in regard to their quality and character, he would inſiſt on no more than their own word and honour, that the thing ſhould be mutually forgot, and that nothing of the ſame kind, which now had been happily prevented, ſhould hereafter be attempted.

Lord ——— ſubmitted to this injunction with a great deal of readineſs, and mr. Bloomacre, ſeeing no other remedy, did the ſame, after which the high-bailiff obliged them to embrace, in token of the ſincerity of their reconciliation.

Thus

Thus ended an affair which had threatened ſuch terrible conſequences.—It made however a very great noiſe, and the diſcourſe upon it was no way to the advantage of lord ———'s character, either for generoſity or courage.—Let us now ſee the ſequel of the challenge ſent by mr. Staple to mr. Trueworth.

Theſe gentlemen met almoſt at the ſame time, in the place the challenger had appointed:—few words ſerved to uſher in the execution of the fatal purpoſe; mr. Staple only ſaid, "Come on, ſir,—"love is the word, and miſs Betſy "Thoughtleſs be the victor's prize."—With theſe words he drew his ſword,—mr. Trueworth alſo drew his, and ſtanding on his defence, ſeeing the other was about to puſh, cried,—"Hold, ſir!—"your better fortune may triumph over "my life, but never make me yield up "my pretenſions to that amiable lady: "—if I fall, I die her martyr, and wiſh "not to live but in the hope of ſerving "her."—Theſe words making mr. Staple imagine, that his rival had indeed the greateſt encouragement to hope every thing, added to the fury he was before poſſeſſed of, "Die then her martyr," ſaid he, and running upon him with more force than ſkill, received a ſlight wound

in his own breaſt, while aiming at the other's heart.

It would be needleſs to mention all the particulars of this combat, — I ſhall only ſay, that the too great eagerneſs of mr. Staple gave the other an advantage over him, which muſt have been fatal to him from a leſs generous enemy; but the temperate mr. Trueworth ſeemed to take an equal care to avoid hurting his rival, as to avoid being hurt by him; — ſeeing, however, that he was about to make a furious puſh at him, he ran in between, cloſed with him, and mr. Staple's foot happening to ſlip, he fell at full length upon the earth, his ſword at the ſame time dropped out of his hand, which mr. Trueworth took up. — "The victory is "yours," cried he, "take alſo my life, "for I diſdain to keep it." — "No," replied mr. Trueworth, "I equally diſ- "dain to take an advantage, which meer "chance has given me: — riſe, ſir, and "let us finiſh the diſpute between us, as "become men of honour." — With theſe words he returned him his ſword. — "I "ſhould be unworthy to be ranked among "that number," ſaid mr. Staple, on receiving it, "to employ this weapon "againſt the breaſt, whoſe generoſity re- "ſtored it, were any thing but miſs Betſy

"at

" at ſtake; — but what is life! — what is " even honour, without the hope of her! " — I therefore accept your noble offer, " and death or conqueſt be my lot!" — They renewed the engagement with greater violence than before: — after ſeveral paſſes, all mr. Trueworth's dexterity could not hinder him from receiving a wound on his left ſide, but he gave the other, at the ſame time, ſo deep a one in his right arm, that it deprived him, in an inſtant, of the power of continuing the fight; on which mr. Trueworth dropping the point of his ſword, ran to him, " I am ſorry, ſir," ſaid he, " for the ac- " cident has happened; — I ſee you are " much hurt, — permit me to aſſiſt you " as well as I am able, and attend you " where proper care may be taken " of you." — " I do not deſerve this " goodneſs," anſwered mr. Staple, " but " it is the will of heaven that you ſhould " vanquiſh every way."

Mr. Trueworth then ſeeing the blood run quite down upon his hand, ſtripped up the ſleeve, and bound the wound from which it iſſued, as tight as he could with his handkerchief, after which they went together to an eminent ſurgeon near Piccadilly. — On examination of his wounds, neither that in his arm, nor in his breaſt,

appeared

appeared to be at all dangerous, the fleſh being only pierced, and no artery or tendon touched. — Mr. Trueworth ſeemed only aſſiduous in his cares for the hurts he had given his rival without mentioning the leaſt word of that, which he had received himſelf, 'till an elderly gentleman, who happened to be with the ſurgeon when they came in, and had all the time been preſent, perceiving ſome blood upon the ſide of his coat, a little above the hip, cried out, "Sir, you neglect yourſelf. "—I fear you have not eſcaped unhurt." "—A trifle," ſaid mr. Trueworth, "a "meer ſcratch, I believe; — 'tis time "enough to think of that." — Nor would he ſuffer the ſurgeon, though he bled very faſt, to come near him, 'till he had done with mr. Staple.—It was, indeed, but a ſlight wound, which mr. Trueworth had received, though happening among a knot of veins, occaſioned the effuſion of a pretty deal of blood; for the ſtoppage of which the ſurgeon applied an immediate remedy, and told him, that it required little for a cure beſides keeping it from air.

Mr. Staple, who had been deeply affected with the concern this generous enemy had expreſſed for him, was equally rejoiced at hearing the wound he had given him would be attended with no bad con-

conſequences. — Every thing that was needful being done for both, the old gentleman prevailed upon them to go with him to a tavern a few doors off, having firſt obtained the ſurgeon's leave, who told him, a glaſs or two of wine could be of no prejudice to either.

This good-natured gentleman, who was called mr. Chatfree, uſed to come frequently to mr. Goodman's houſe, had ſome knowlege of mr. Staple, and though he was wholly unacquainted with mr. Trueworth, conceived ſo great an eſteem for him, from his behaviour towards the perſon he had fought with, that he thought he could not do a more meritorious action, than to reconcile to each other two ſuch worthy perſons. — What effect his endeavours, or rather their own nobleneſs of ſentiments produced, ſhall preſently be ſhewn.

CHAP. XXIII.

Among other things neceſſary to be told, gives an account of the ſucceſs of a plot laid by mr. Chatfree, for the diſcovery of miſs Betſy's real inclinations.

THOUGH mr. Goodman had as yet no intimation of the accidents of that morning,

morning, yet was he extremely uneaſy; — the looks, as well as words of mr. Staple, in going out of his houſe the day before, were continually in his mind, and he could not forbear apprehending ſome fatal conſequence would, one time or other, attend the levity of miſs Betſy's behaviour and conduct, in regard to her admirers: he was alſo both ſurprized and vexed, that mr. Bloomacre, from whom he expected an explanation of the Weſtminſter-abbey adventure, had not come according to his requeſt. — This laſt motive of his diſquiet was, however, ſoon removed: mr. Bloomacre was no leſs impatient to clear himſelf of all blame concerning the tranſactions of that night, had no ſooner finiſhed his affair with lord ———, and was diſmiſſed by the high-bailiff, than he came directly to mr. Goodman's, and recited to him, and all the ladies, the whole of what had paſſed.

Miſs Betſy laughed prodigiouſly, but mr. Goodman ſhook his head, on hearing the particulars related by mr. Bloomacre, and, after that gentleman was gone, reproved, as he thought it his duty to do, the inconſiderateneſs of her conduct: — he told her, that as ſhe was alone, ſhe ought to have left the abbey as ſoon as divine ſervice was ended; — that for a perſon

perſon of her ſex, age, and appearance, to walk in a place where there were always a great concourſe of young ſparks, who come for no other purpoſe than to make remarks upon the ladies, could not but be looked on as very odd by all who ſaw her. — "There was no rain," ſaid he, "till a long time after the ſervice "was ended, and you might then, in all "probability, have got a chair; — or, if "not, the walk over the park could not "have been a very great fatigue."

Miſs Betſy bluſhed extremely, not through a conſcious ſhame of imagining what ſhe had done deſerved the leaſt rebuke, but becauſe her ſpirit, yet unbroke, could not bear controul: — ſhe replied, that as ſhe meant no ill, thoſe who cenſured her were moſt in fault. — "That "is very true," anſwered mr. Goodman; "but, my dear child, you cannot but know "it is a fault which too many in the "world are guilty of. — I doubt not of "your innocence, but would have you "conſider, that reputation is alſo of ſome "value; — that the honour of a young "maid like you, is a flower of ſo tender "and delicate a nature, that the leaſt breath "of ſcandal withers and deſtroys it. — "In fine, that it is not enough to be "good, without behaving in ſuch a man-

"ner

" ner as ſhall make others acknowlege " us to be ſo."

Miſs Betſy had too much underſtanding not to be ſenſible what her guardian ſaid, on this occaſion, was perfectly juſt; and alſo, that he had a right to offer his advice, whenever her conduct rendered it neceſſary, but could not help being vexed, that any thing ſhe did ſhould be liable to cenſure, as ſhe thought it merited none: — ſhe made no further reply, however, to what mr. Goodman ſaid, though he continued his remonſtrances, and probably would have gone on yet longer, if not interrupted by the coming in of mr. Chatfree. — This gentleman having parted from the two wounded rivals came directly to mr. Goodman's, in order to ſee how miſs Betſy would receive the intelligence he had to bring her.

After paying his compliments to mr. Goodman, and the other ladies, he came toward miſs Betſy, and looking on her with a more than ordinary earneſtneſs in his countenance, " Ah, madam!" ſaid he, " I ſhall never hereafter ſee you without " remembring what Cowley ſays of a lady " who might I ſuppoſe be like you:

" So fatal, and withal ſo fair,
" We're told deſtroying angels are."

Though

Though miſs Betſy was not at that time in a humour to have any great reliſh for raillery, yet ſhe could not forbear replying to what this old gentleman ſaid, in the manner in which ſhe imagined he ſpoke. — "You are, at leaſt, paſt the "age of being deſtroyed by any weapons "I carry about me," cried ſhe; — "but "pray what meaning have you in this "terrible ſimile?" — "My meaning is "as terrible as the ſimile," anſwered he; "and though I believe you to be very "much the favourite of heaven, I know "not how you will atone for the miſ-"chief you have been the occaſion of "this morning; — but it may be," continued he, "you think it nothing that "thoſe murdering eyes of yours have "ſet two gentlemen a fighting."

Miſs Betſy, ſuppoſing no other than that he had heard of the quarrel between mr. Bloomacre and lord ———, replied merrily, "Pray accuſe my eyes of no ſuch "thing, — they are very innocent I aſſure "you." — "Yes," cried mr. Goodman, and lady Mellaſin at the ſame time, "we "can clear miſs Betſy of this accuſation."

"What!" rejoined mr. Chatfree, haſtily, "was not mr. Staple and mr. True-"worth rivals for her love?" — "Mr. "Staple

" Staple and mr. Trueworth," ſaid miſs Betſy, in a good deal of conſternation, " pray what of them!" " Oh! the moſt " inveterate duel," anſwered he, " they " fought above half an hour, and poor " mr. Staple is dead of his wounds." — " Dead!" cried miſs Betſy, with a great ſcream. — lady Mellaſin and miſs Flora ſeemed very much alarmed; but mr. Goodman was ready to ſink from his chair, 'till mr. Chatfree, unſeen by miſs Betſy, winked upon him, in token that he was not in earneſt in what he ſaid.

The diſtraction in which this young lady now appeared, — the concern ſhe expreſſed for mr. Staple, and her indignation againſt mr. Trueworth, would have made any one think the former had much the preference in her eſteem, 'till mr. Chatfree, after having liſtened to her exclamations on this ſcore, cried out on a ſudden, " Ah, madam, what a miſtake has the " confuſion I was involved in made me " guilty of. — Alas! I have deceived " you, though without deſigning to do " ſo, — mr. Staple lives, — it is mr. True- " worth who has fallen a ſacrifice to his " unſucceſsful paſſion for you."

" Trueworth dead!" cried miſs Betſy, " O God! — and does his murderer live

" to

" to triumph in the fall of the beſt and " moſt accompliſhed man on earth? — " Oh! may all the miſeries, that heaven " and fortune can inflict, light on him! " — Is he not ſecured, mr. Chatfree? — " Will he not be hanged?

Mr. Chatfree could hold his countenance no longer, but burſting into a violent fit of laughter, " Ah, miſs Betſy! — " miſs Betſy!" ſaid he, " I have caught " you? — Mr. Trueworth I find then is " the happy man." — " What do you " mean mr. Chatfree?" cried miſs Betſy " very much amazed. — " I beg your " pardon," anſwered he, " for the fright " I have put you in; but be comforted, " for mr. Trueworth is not dead I aſſure " you, and, I doubt not, lives as much " your ſlave as ever." — " I do not care " what he is, if he is not dead," ſaid miſs Betſy; " but pray for what end did " you invent this fine ſtory?" — " Nay, " madam," reſumed he, " it is not al- " together my own inventing neither; " for mr. Trueworth and mr. Staple have " had a duel this morning, and both of " them are wounded, though not ſo dan- " gerouſly as I pretended, meerly to try, " by the concern you would expreſs, " which of them you were moſt inclined

" to

" to favour, — and I have done it i'faith,
" — mr. Trueworth is the man."

Lady Mellaſin, who had not ſpoke during all this converſation, now cried out, " Aye, mr. Chatfree, we ſhall ſoon " have a wedding, I believe." — " Be- " lieve, madam," ſaid he, " why your " ladyſhip may ſwear it; — for my part " I will not give above a fortnight for " the concluſion, — and I will venture to " wiſh the fair bride joy on the occaſion, " for he is a fine gentleman, — a very " fine gentleman indeed, and I think ſhe " could not have made a better choice." With theſe words he wiped his mouth, and advanced to miſs Betſy, in order to ſalute her; but puſhing him ſcornfully back, " None of your flights, good mr. " Chatfree," ſaid ſhe, " if I thought " you were in earneſt, I would never ſee " the face of mr. Trueworth more."

This did not hinder the pleaſant old gentleman from continuing his raillery; — he plainly told miſs Betſy that ſhe was in love, — that he ſaw the marks of it upon her, and that it was in vain for her to deny it. — Lady Mellaſin laughed very heartily to ſee the fret miſs Betſy was in, at hearing mr. Chatfree talk in this manner; but miſs Flora, to whom one would imagine

imagine this ſcene would have been diverting enough, never opened her lips to utter one ſyllable; but made ſuch grimaces, as had they been taken notice of, would have ſhewn how little ſhe was pleaſed with it.

Mr. Goodman had been ſo much ſtruck with the firſt account given by mr. Chatfree, that he was not to be rouſed by any thing that gentleman ſaid afterwards; — he reflected, that though the conſequences of the rencounter between the two rivals had been leſs fatal than he had been made to imagine, yet it might have happened, and indeed been naturally expected; he could not therefore forbear interrupting his friend's mirth, by remonſtrating to miſs Betſy, in the moſt ſerious terms, the great error ſhe was guilty of, in encouraging a plurality of lovers at the ſame time: — he told her, that gentlemen of mr. Trueworth's and mr. Staple's character and fortune, ought not to be trifled with, "Suppoſe," ſaid he, "that one or both "of them had indeed been killed, how "could you have anſwered to yourſelf, "or to the world, the having been the "ſad occaſion?"

"Lord, ſir," replied miſs Betſy, walking up and down the room in a good deal

deal of agitation, — " what would you " have me do? — I do not want the men " to love me, — and if they will play " the fool and fight, and kill one ano- " ther, it is none of my fault."

In fine, between mr. Chatfree's raillery, and mr. Goodman's admonitions, this poor young lady was teized beyond all patience, and finding it impoſſible to put a ſtop to either, ſhe flew out of the room, ready to cry with vexation.

She was no ſooner gone, than mr. Goodman took mr. Chatfree into his cloſet, and having learned from him all the particulars of the late duel, and conſulted with him what was proper to be done to prevent any farther miſchief of the like ſort, they went together to mr. Staple's lodging, in order to uſe their utmoſt endeavours to prevail on that gentleman to deſiſt the proſecution of his addreſſes to miſs Betſy.

END *of the* FIRST VOLUME.

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